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Except a man
be born again,
he cannot see
the kingdom
of God.—John 3:3.

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The Lord's Book.
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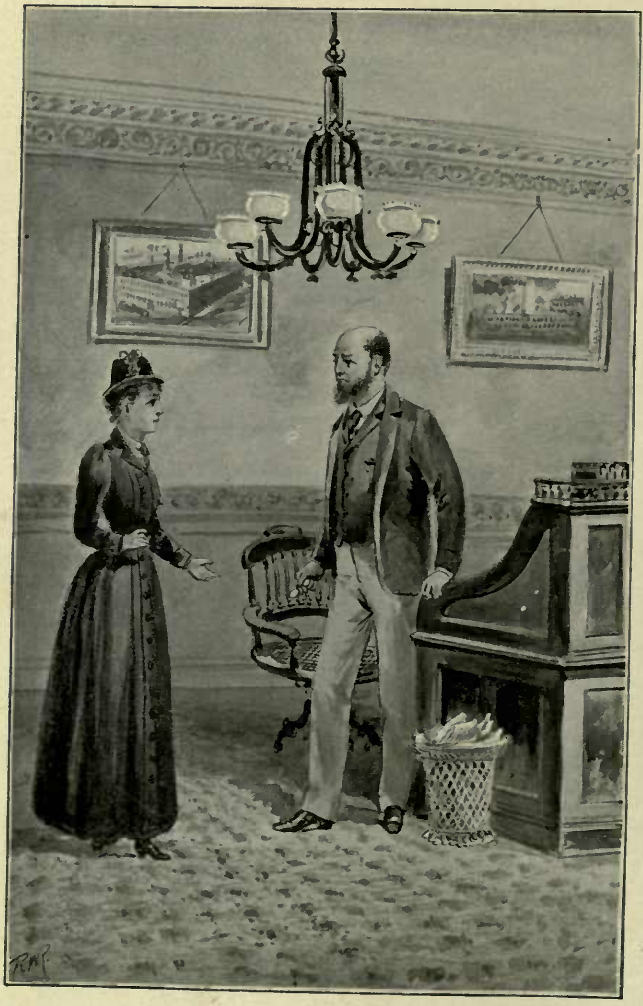

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Mr. Grosvenor's Daughter.

A STORY OF CITY LIFE.

BY

JULIA MACNAIR WRIGHT.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
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PREFACE.

THERE was a busy idler once who spent much time in looking at various objects through a microscope. One day he had placed in a glass cup a little world of pond water, and in it, moored to a twig, he saw what seemed to be a pair of wheel-like organs continually revolving. As he looked steadfastly, he perceived that the wheels were not really turning, but were made up of fine hairs, or cilia, set in a close circle, and, moved by a compact and vigorous muscular system, lashed the water with such velocity that they seemed to be whirling like the fly-wheels of an engine in operation. This motion of the cilia whipping the water occasioned a vortex determined towards the wheels, and just back of these wheels lay a gizzard or digestive organ, which was constantly filled and fed by the living atoms swept into it by the revolving cilia; for this that the busy idler was observing was neither more nor less than a rotifer, an animal which is all stomach, and tentacles for filling that stomach.

There was another busy idler who, for want of a better occupation, went up in a balloon and,

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hanging high in air, saw pathways and highways meeting and intersecting where the city, a great rotifer, lay across the roads, whirling its tentacles of factories and forges, markets and exchanges, andby their force creating a current which determined the varied flotsam and jetsam of human life into its open maw.

The rotifer whipping the water deflects from their course and captures the living creatures idly cruising about for pleasure, or hungrily seeking food, or curiously gratifying inquisitiveness. The rotifer of civilization, the city, drags into itself the enjoyment-loving, the wealth-seeker, the curious, the hunger-bitten, and holds them and will not let them go.

From these myriads drawn into the city and held there inexorably, how often and how long rises a bitter cry for a better adjustment of burdens, for a broadening and ameliorating and uplifting of their lives! What shall be done for all these? Once, in the ancient days, there was a glorious and golden city in a plain. "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom is great, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not I will know."

THE AUTHOR.

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MR. GROSVENOR'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DAUGHTER OF DIVES.

"She was one of those who by fortune's boon
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle;
To speak according to poets' wont,
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,
And Midas rocked the cradle."

In the city the daughters of Dives and the daughters of Dives' poor brethren live near together. The daughter of Dives has her windows open upon the broad and stately thoroughfares and avenues, the daughter of the poor shelters in the little back courts, alleys, and no-thoroughfares. The daughter of Dives finds her wants supplied by the labor of her impoverished sister in Adam, and she in turn secures her bread and her bed by providing for the wants or catering to the whims of the daughter of Dives. Whether these realize it or not, whether they are friends or enemies or mutually ignorant of each other altogether, whether the consumer never thinks of the producer, or the producer ignores the consumer, there is between them a continuous interchange of the offices of civilized life, and the one cannot exist without the other. Neither of them has ever appreciated the inner heart of this vital truth: neither of them has ever fulfilled her office and errand to the other as it has been assigned her by God. Sometimes a little light of realization, a little beautiful effort, a little vigorous sympathetic common-sense action, has been secured; but the real work each for each, the real sympathy and fellowship, has not yet begun. When this is well inaugurated, when it reaches its true greatness, it will usher in the social golden age.

We cannot consider in this book the poor man's daughter only, for the daughter of Dives is there close beside her. We must write of the two together, and let us begin, with due courtesy, with the daughter of Dives, for social law sets her in the precedence, and upon her also is laid the heaviest responsibility for what has gone wrong in the social relations of the daughters of a common humanity.

* * * * *

The daughter of Dives appears upon the scene as Miss Grosvenor, ready for a full-dress promenade. She is two feet high. Her eyes are blue, innocent, laughter-filled, her complexion true apple-blossom, her hair soft golden rings.

> "Just come from heaven, its gates have shed
> Their sunshine on the baby's head."

Miss Grosvenor wears a blue velvet cloak and a bonnet to match, both affluent in Brussels lace. As this stage of her earthly experience Miss Grosvenor does not know whether the roses on the carpet are real flowers or fabrications; she supposes that the ceiling with its chandelier is part of the sun-lit firmament; the centre-table affords her a magnificent pavilion, and she walks among the drawing-room chairs as one walks in mighty groves. Small as she is, Miss Grosvenor is the central sun of this city establishment, splendid with suddenly made wealth. Around her, as satellites, revolve the various members of the family, her father like Saturn in a triple belt of business cares; her mother, Jupiter-wise drawing dress-makers, milliners, and shop-keepers as moons in her train; Uncle Josiah as a distant Neptune or Uranus watching apart; the French *bonne* taking her time from Miss Grosvenor, as the earth from the sun. The housekeeper might have been a moon, and all the servants inconsiderable asteroids, in this system of which Miss Grosvenor was the centre. The French *bonne*, by the way, was likely to give

Miss Grosvenor some serious mispronunciations both of French and English and some very doubtful ideas as to religion and morals.

This resplendent city home was not however a fragment of the Milky Way, a solar-system moving carefully as God wills; it was a "shining constellation lying apart," a portion of a social and monetary system in which the idea of God in Christ is growing daily dim. The last spark of the former simple, plain, God-fearing, honest, old-time family habits expired when papa and mamma Grosvenor named their heiress Deborah, after her paternal grandmother. This name the father, reminiscent of his boyhood, insisted upon; the family agreed that the cognomen was hideous, but its bearer, being a beautiful, imperious little heiress, reigned thenceforth as Miss Grosvenor.

When Miss Grosvenor first began to manage her own hands and feet and have her own opinions, her sweet generous nature inclined her towards other children, and those whose poverty made them more forlorn won her kindest smiles; she would interrupt her dress parade in the avenue or park to take the hand of some shabby youngster, offer her box of candy to be shared, or endow with her best doll some doll-less child. The *bonne*, not daring to slap Miss Grosvenor for such early Christian manifestations, slapped the recipients of her bounty, and drove them away with opprobrious epithets, thus impressing Miss Grosvenor with the great fact that the person with money and the person without money belong to different orders of creation and have nothing in common.

Miss Grosvenor was taught to bestow her sweetest smiles and most gracious little words and gestures upon the people who wore good clothes. After a training of some length in this direction Miss Grosvenor ceased to lighten by a smile the woes of poverty, and instead turned up her dear little nose at the miserable and drew away her short skirts as she passed them with lofty head.

Uncle Josiah, from his distant sphere in the family system, averred that being always worshipped, waited upon, and indulged, being always a receiver and never a giver, Miss Grosvenor would become hard, narrow, selfish, vain. Uncle Josiah mourned when he saw the little white soul of his niece becoming clouded with pride and self-will. Uncle Josiah saw this but seldom, as he lived in a distant village, having all his life preferred a holy peace to the strife after gold. Uncle Josiah emphatically loved not the world, devoting himself to serving God among his fellows and growing in grace with what celerity he might. Uncle Josiah was odd and old-fashioned, Dives said, but said it always with a thought of reverence and a self-condemning admiration and envy of that serene and consecrated life hidden in Christ with God, and so contented now and so safe for by-and-by. The parental Dives no doubt wished his child to have Uncle Josiah's approval, and if at any serious hour the question had been put, did he wish Deborah to be like Josiah or himself, he would have sighed and admitted that Josiah had chosen a good part, not to be taken away, because in all things he had set God and his grace first.

Now and then papa or mamma found time to teach their child a prayer before she went to bed; but generally these parents were too busy with money-getting and money-spending to remember the spiritual needs of the little one, so she went prayerless to bed or the *bonne* taught her an *Ave*.

When Miss Grosvenor was five years old she was sent, at the pastor's suggestion, to the infant class in the Sunday-school. She went in a gown loaded with embroidery; she wore French boots, kid gloves, and a hat so covered with plumes that it looked like Birnam wood moving upon Dunsinane. Before she left home she was informed that she was the loveliest and best dressed child in the city. She naturally spent the class hour in meditating upon her own appearance and comparing notes on clothes with the other children.

Christianity as represented in a wealthy church is by no means at a discount in the nineteenth century. Mr. and Mrs. Grosvenor had handed in their church letters when they came to the city; they purchased a commodious pew and were usually present at the morning service at church. The dinner on Sunday was the most elaborate one of the week; guests were frequently present. Miss Grosvenor sometimes went to church, always shared the dinner, was petted by the guests, and in the afternoon went to drive with her papa, who was too busy to go out with her on secular days.

When Miss Grosvenor was seven years of age she began to go to school. Sometimes she went to a kindergarten, sometimes to the Sisters at the convent, sometimes to a "Fashionable School for Young Ladies;" sometimes she did not go at all. At thirteen her ignorance would have been phenomenal had it not been shared by many of her young friends who were similarly brought up. But meantime at six years of age she had been sent to a dancing-school, and seven years of attendance, twice a week, had enabled her to dance charmingly, and her mamma's friends declared that she had "angelic manners." Possibly some passing angel, knowing of "angelic manners" from long citizenship in heaven, may have dissented from the verdict of the family friends.

"For what are you training your child," asked Uncle Josiah, "for this world or for heaven?"

"I do n't see why you speak as if she could not be trained for both," said mamma Grosvenor plaintively.

"I see no training for heaven!" said Uncle Josiah. "She knows the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, but almost nothing else from the Bible. She does not know whether Genesis is in the front or the back part of the book."

Mamma Grosvenor discovered that at thirteen years of age her daughter was growing up towards young lady-hood, and there was a change of *regime.* The *bonne* was dismissed, a governess was engaged, and Miss Grosvenor was obliged to practise two hours daily and was drilled at times in French and German. She also read what novels she chose, making her own selection. Her childish toys were sent to the garret, Miss Grosvenor learned to play cards, her hair was done up higher, and her gowns were lengthened.

And here there was a change in her surroundings, for mamma Grosvenor died, and when Miss Grosvenor was fifteen she had a new mamma, who prided herself upon sedulously completing the work of the first mamma upon the same lines. Under her supervision Miss Grosvenor spent all her time in amusing herself or in doing something to accomplish herself.

Uncle Josiah declared that his niece's training was securing its legitimate result, and making of her a vain, frivolous, useless woman; he said she was unfitted to meet the dangers and trials of life; she had been left without religious principles or moral purposes; she had no knowledge of her Bible, no communion with God. But Miss Grosvenor herself had no idea that she lacked anything, and would have asked calmly, "What is there worth having which money cannot buy?"

When Miss Grosvenor had completed her seventeenth year she entered society as a full-blown young lady. In the dizzy maze and splendor of her first season in society Miss Grosvenor took part in balls, dinners, card-parties, suppers, concerts, operas, theatres, until between late hours, continuous dancing and visiting, she would have died of fatigue if she had not slept each day until noon, and on Sabbath stayed in bed all day until it was time to rise and receive her young gentlemen callers.

But right in the midst of these festivities two, the gayest of her young friends, died. These deaths caused a sudden lull in the winter's dissipation. A revivalist was preaching in the city; religious interest pervaded the churches. A large number of young people, Miss Grosvenor among them, concluded that they had better join the church. Miss Grosvenor had supposed that her church officials would lay down some rules for her conduct, expound to her her duties, give her some warnings, demand promises, or inquire into her experiences. She was rather in terror, for she found her mind a blank as to religious knowledge or holy purposes. But she was only welcomed and shaken hands with and called a child of the church, and had it taken for granted that as her parents were church members they had given her all due instructions.

After that there was a little seeming piety. Miss Grosvenor taught in Sunday-school for a whole month and attended prayer-meeting with more or less regularity until warm weather arrived. Then she went to Saratoga, the White Mountains, Europe; and who can be religious while travelling? Not Miss Grosvenor.

People said that Dives' daughter was hard-hearted; she made several engagements of marriage and broke them at her pleasure. She seemed cold as an icicle and careless as a butter-fly. But sometimes, when she heard minor music or saw a funeral, she wished that she had been brought up in a different way and were not so afraid to die. Once an old minister asked her about her future hope. She said she "supposed of course she should get to heaven."

"Would you enjoy heaven if you reached there?" he asked. "Might you not find yourself an alien in heaven? The only door of heaven is the crucified Christ; the language of heaven has for its key-note 'Not unto us, but unto thy name be glory.' God is our Father because we are found in Christ, his Son; the garments of heaven are washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and there the 'happy dear-bought people' follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

When Miss Grosvenor heard all this she looked into her heart and found nothing in harmony with heaven. Then she was greatly discontented.

She found around her many who mocked at the "Calvary myth," and her present mother made no pretence of caring for religious matters. With her father, Dives, she was but slightly acquainted; she thought of Uncle Josiah and wondered if his life had ever been such an arid desert as she found hers in its spring.

Lookers-on in Venice thought that this daughter of Dives should be the happiest of women.

She had youth, health, beauty, leisure, riches; and yet she lived in a supreme discontent, for "man doth not live by bread alone," and "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth." Her Uncle Josiah remarked Miss Grosvenor's weariness and discontent, and said she was born for something better than the trivial worldly life; it was God who was stirring up the young eagle's nest to dislodge her and force her to take flight nearer to the sun.

When Miss Grosvenor was out driving or riding on horseback with a groom attending her, or was reclining lazily in her carriage, while her mother spent hours in the stores looking at new styles, the tired harassed daughters of Lazarus sometimes saw her and envied her. How happy she ought to be! What was there that she lacked? Why that droop at the corners of the pretty mouth? As for Miss Grosvenor, she never noticed these daughters of Lazarus or thought of them at all; it never occurred to her that their faces were pale, their eyes heavy, their manner bold or discouraged, their hands work-worn, their whole situation depressing and painful. By her nature she had been sympathetic, helpful, loving, ready to make common cause with all. In fact nearly all young children seem to have inherited the inspirations of the early church. But in Miss Deborah Grosvenor these original humanities had been deeply buried under a selfish training; she had forgotten that the world was made for any one but the daughter of Dives, and yet the daughter of Dives did not enjoy her world! Finally she was twenty-one, and began to wonder why she had ever been born, and to think that it was all a great mistake.

One bank holiday when Dives, for a wonder, had withdrawn from his business cares for an hour or two, he went out to ride in the great barouche with his wife and daughter. At a turn in the avenue two of the huge dray horses wherewith Lazarus does part of his work for Dives, in a frantic runaway bore down upon the slenderly built thoroughbreds of Dives. The coachman and footman on their high seat saw the danger and sprang to save themselves. Why should they risk anything for Dives who was only their employer? One of them reached the ground with a broken arm, the other with a broken neck. The three who were in the barouche did not see what was coming upon them; there was a rush, a crash, an overset, the wild cry of human and brute agony. The next day black silk and crape hung from the door of Dives, for Mrs. Grosvenor had only survived the accident for an hour. The papers said that

Miss Grosvenor was uninjured and that Mr. Grosvenor had received a hurt of a very serious character. Thus in an instant Deborah Grosvenor, who had been cradled all her life in down and roses, found herself standing between the living and the dead in her dismayed household.

CHAPTER II.

"THE RICH MAN ALSO DIED."

" But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match,
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?"

IN the Grosvenor household there was a most dignified housekeeper who wore a black silk gown, and whose function it was to keep the establishment always in the show order of a brilliant social life. She had never been called upon to administer upon sickness and death, and before the horror of these she sank helpless. There was also a white-headed Scotch dame, Nurse Jamieson, of sixty, who had long lived with Grandmother Deborah, and at his mother's death Dives had brought Nurse Jamieson to his home; and, as Miss Grosvenor was then fifteen and too old for a nurse, the dame had enjoyed a cosey little room in the attic and a leisure broken only by the care of the family mending. When Dives was carried in, crushed and helpless, Nurse Jamieson took her place by his bedside and telegraphed for Uncle Josiah. Then, as if aroused at last into life by the call of necessity, Miss Grosvenor took the reins of the household, sent for doctors and undertakers, directed the servants, ordered the mourning, and when Nurse Jamieson reminded her that the footman was in the hospital and the coachman was dead, and both had families—she sent a fifty-dollar bill to each of the families, for so far as she knew money answereth all things. Uncle Josiah had expected to find a pale girl in hysterics in a darkened room; instead, he met a calm, emotionless, self-assured woman, draped in the most rigid black, who in the shaded library was giving audience to the undertaker and the family doctor. She gave her hand to Uncle Josiah, who kissed her cheek.

"I am glad you are come," she said; "we waited for you to announce the hour of the funeral; and I wanted your advice whether to telegraph to Dr. Grace to consult with Dr. Martin, in father's case. We have already sent to Boston for Dr. Grant. Is Dr. Grace in your opinion a finer surgeon?"

But when he went to his brother Dives, Dives said to him, "Josiah, I am not to be deceived. Deborah is telegraphing for all the surgeons in the country, and wants to have one from London. She has been brought up to think that money can do anything, and supposes now that it can save me. I know that my case is hopeless. In a few weeks, at most, I shall go whence I shall not return. God has seen that I have been too busy to remember Him, and this is his way of answering the prayers of our mother, which are yet lying unanswered before his throne—he sends me a waiting-time to prepare to meet my God."

Then the funeral of Mrs. Grosvenor was concluded with great splendor, the house relapsed into gloom and order, no one told Miss Grosvenor that her father was taking the downward way to death. She believed that he would recover in due season, and now for the first time in her life she had opportunity to get acquainted with him. The crisis in affairs having passed, all the servants having recovered their self-command, there was nothing for Miss Grosvenor but to sink back in her darkened home into her customary inanition and general disgust. It all seemed more tedious than ever.

Now also Uncle Josiah had opportunity to get acquainted with his niece, and this the more earnestly because Dives had been stirred to great anxiety and remorse concerning her, and thought how she had been robbed of human interests and spiritual heritage, and made by a narrow round of frivolous cares and amusements to centre all her thoughts and wishes upon herself. Dives, brought into a new clearness of vision by the strong light falling over him from that eternity which he was nearing, wished to undo this work of his hands. Uncle Josiah, finding that his brother was so dissatisfied with what he had done for his daughter, wondered if Deborah herself was better suited. There were many hours when the sick man must be left alone to silence and his nurses; Uncle Josiah had then time to talk with his niece. Hitherto in his short visits Miss Grosvenor had been in such a whirl of gayeties that her uncle had scarcely been able to have an hour with her. He remarked her listless way and the profound melancholy on her face. "You are mourning for Mrs. Grosvenor?" he said: "her death was terribly sudden and she was very little prepared to meet it."

"I do n't want you to believe me to be different from what I am," said Deborah. "I am not thinking about my step-mother. I do n't suppose she and I loved each other, and we were very little together. I fancy that she was not a woman to be very fond even of her own children if she had had any. She was just and polite to me, and I was respectful to her. But she was a woman without heart, and—do you know, I have never yet been able to decide if I have any."

"You looked so melancholy; and I saw only that cause, unless your father's state alarms you."

"Oh father will get well, I am sure! He suffers less each day. When he is recovered we will go to Europe together. As to my looking melancholy, when did you ever see me look happy? Unless it was long ago when I was too small to understand how little I was to get out of the world."

"But, niece, any one would say you got a good deal out of the world. You are surrounded with riches."

"Why do n't you say submerged in them? Water is a good thing, indispensable; but a man may be drowned in it. I have been drowned in these riches; I am stifled, overwhelmed by riches. I have grown to hate this glitter and grandeur and do-nothingness. This splendor that other people envy me hampers me and tires me out. I think the poem about Miss Kilmansegg is one I can heartily appreciate—at least until it comes to where she marries that detestable foreign count; and, who knows? I may even go as far as that yet in my weariness."

"Riches have not particularly attracted *me*," said Uncle Josiah; "but I am old and grave, and you are young and gay. You surprise me."

"You would not be surprised if you 'd stop to think about it. In this world it is, I suppose, a pleasure to desire something, to want something, perhaps even to work for something. I have had all my desires forestalled; all my wishes were gratified before they were half realized as wishes. I never found a chance to work for anything. I have been petted and estimated for what I have, not for what I am. I do not know whether or not there is anything in me; I have never had a chance to find out. Would n't you get sick of life if some one had always stood ready to button your shoes and put on your coat, if you were never allowed to brush your own hair or to be left to your own resources for an hour? I have come to hate my multitude of gowns, having always half a dozen to be forced to choose from for every occasion, and always more got before there is anything wrong with the ones I have, only the people have seen them a time or two. I have read of girls who have had to plan and manage to get a gown, were forced to take care of it and repair it and make it over and respect it as a valuable possession. I should think there would be some pleasure in that."

"As to the multitude of wasted, idle gowns," said Uncle Josiah, "what seems to me painful about them is, that the price of one is often more than a whole year's living to some other girl; and while you have gowns to burden you, your sister maidens go perhaps in rags, or are cold, suffering for a mere sufficiency of garments."

"I don't know anything about that," said Miss Grosvenor.

"What else do you hate beside the gowns?" asked her uncle.

"I have hinted it to you already. This having nothing to do, this being of no value to myself or any one except for the money in my purse, with nothing to do for myself or for any one else. I don't even dress myself, because there is the maid. I live purposeless, as a dead leaf drifting on the wind. Why, uncle, I have envied shop-girls, working-girls, girls I have seen going out to do some daily work for bread. They have something to go and come for; they look in earnest; they have a purpose; they walk quickly along, going they know where, while I sit in the carriage because I am tired of sitting in the house, and the carriage goes where the coachman chooses to drive or where some one tells him to take me. I don't play or sing, because the professionals do it better; I have read novels until I am sick of make-believe; the pleasures that were new and amusing when I first entered society have become bores. Sometimes I wish I were a laundress or a seamstress, with half a dozen hungry little children to be responsible for and work for and care for—and to care for me. Who has ever cared much for me? Father, since he has been sick, looks as if he did sometimes."

"You are not obliged to live in this way," said Uncle Josiah. "Riches bring responsibilities. The world is full of the poor and the suffering to be helped. All your money and all your leisure are trusts to you from God, to be used in his service. Our Master pleased not himself, but went about doing good. Why should not you?"

"I don't know what good to do," said Deborah. "I should have been cheated and imposed upon on every hand; the unworthy would have made prey of me, and the worthy I should never have found. My friends would have been surprised at me and called me cranky and singular; and I should have made myself conspicuous."

"It seems to me," replied her uncle, "that you are regarding entirely the opinions of human beings, and not at all the judgment of God."

"Perhaps so. That was the way I was brought up. 'What will people think,' 'What will the world say?' that was measure for me. 'It looks well,' 'It is the fashion,' these were reasons."

"At twenty-one life is mostly before you; waste no more years."

"If I were poor," sighed Miss Grosvenor, "I might do something. As I am, I shall, I suppose, go on as I have. I sit down to a luxurious table to food for which I have no appetite, and when I think at all, I think, 'Perhaps plain food, earned, would be good to eat.' I live like one of my orchids in a hot-house. How would it feel to stand in the bracing air of poverty? I who have never done an hour's work," and she held out a soft small white hand, "feel some days as if work were the only thing worth living for. I think one would respect a dollar that was the result of one's own toil. Why has my father toiled like a galley-slave all his life, that I, his daughter, might be a do-nothing?"

"Child, you become philosophic," said Uncle Josiah.

Uncle Josiah returned to his brother's room. Dives was asleep and Nurse Agnes Jamieson was sitting waiting in a deep window of the hall. Uncle Josiah knew her worth, and he sat down beside her to consult with her.

"I don't know what to make of Miss Grosvenor," he said.

"The lassie is her güid gran'mither a' ower again an' she were not swathed an' bun'led up in her riches so she couldna stir heart, han', nor foot," said Agnes. "She has by nature the strong mind an' the firm han' and the true and tender heart, but a' has been smothered an' buried deep in warldly ways an' vanity and riches. It is na for me to direct the ways of Providence; but it does seem to me, Maister Josiah, that if instead o' takin' her father, the Lord had clean taken awa' her fortune, an' made a poor woman o' her, she 'd 'a' had a chance to show what she is made o'. Ye ken, Maister Josiah, that she is no happy nor content; there is aye an unsatisfied longin' in her: she feels strivin's an' rebellions aboot she kens na what. The florists tell ye, sir, aboot plants bein' root-bound, or pot-bound, so they canna thrive; Miss Deborah has been root-bound a' her life. She wasna made to find her satisfaction in trifles: she was formed for a wide scope, an' they ha' narrowed her doon to self-servin', an' she canna be content. Gie her a chance, an' ye 'd see her gran'mither ower again!"

Uncle Josiah wondered if this were true. Did his brother see this? Nearing death, Dives had deep searchings of heart. He realized that he had spent his strength in vain, and his labor for that which satisfieth not. How very worthless seemed all those things which he had pursued with consuming zeal; how large and solemn looked eternity; how few if any sheaves had he to carry with him to the Lord of the harvest! "Thou fool, thy soul shall be required of thee;

then whose shall be all those things which thou possessedst?" These words seemed written by a mysterious hand on the walls of his room, and like Belshazzar he was sore afraid.

Whose should those things be? His daughter's. And would they make her any better or happier? He feared not. He realized now that she was not a useful or happy girl, and this great fortune would make her a prey to sharpers. He said to his brother, "When I was a boy I read a poem about a girl who had a golden leg; I wish I knew what it was. I think it meant a great deal."

"It was Hood's 'Miss Kilmansegg,'" said Uncle Josiah, "and it does mean a great deal. I will bring the book and read it to you." So Uncle Josiah got the book from the library and slowly read the story of the heiress to Dives. Then he turned a few leaves and read "The Song of the Shirt" and then "The Bridge of Sighs." Then silence fell in the room a while. "Brother," said Uncle Josiah, "was it worth your toil, the slavery of body, brain, and soul, to make of Deborah a Miss Kilmansegg? 'The Song of the Shirt,' 'The Bridge of Sighs,' tell you of other women and girls who toil and suffer and die unhelped. Why was not your child taught that the very fact of wealth and leisure gave her responsibility towards and for these?"

Dives groaned.

Later in the day Deborah came into the room and found the book lying on the bed. "Read to me," said Dives. Deborah turned over the pages. Here was a poem new to her. It might be light and pleasing, fit for a sick man's ear—"The Lady's Dream." Deborah was a good reader by nature—not by education, for she had no true education. Her inner sympathies, her deep heart of hearts, came out in her reading. The reading told of a wealth of hidden emotion and power of which no one knew. She forgot as she read that the poem was very different from what she had expected. She thrilled her father and herself and Uncle Josiah as she read:

"Alas! I have walked through life
  Too heedless where I trod;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow-worm
  And fill the burial sod,
Forgetting that even a sparrow falls
  Not unmarked of God.

"The wounds I might have healed!
  The human sorrow and smart!
And yet it was never in my soul
  To play so ill a part;
But evil is wrought by want of thought
  As well as want of heart."

She closed the book. "Father! I am that lady; that has been my life until now, and so I suppose it will continue to be until the end. Hardly worth living for, is it? I am like the Lady of Shalott, weaving an idle web of colors gay, and grown half sick of shadows."

She went away. The brothers looked at each other.

"The Lady of Shalott left her web and left her loom," said Uncle Josiah. "She left the unreal for the real, the shadow for substance."

"I have made mistakes which it is too late to rectify," said Dives.

"My brother," said Uncle Josiah, "perhaps God has set you here, aside from the business cares of the world, here in the strong light of eternity, where you can estimate the true value of things that perish in the using; and perhaps you can still save your child from the dangers that are about her."

"Last night," said Mr. Grosvenor, "I had a dream. I was between sleeping and waking, thinking of these things, and in a dream or vision I saw a hand reached out of heaven which crumbled, like a house built of cards, all this great fortune I have risked so much to gain! And then I saw my child shaking off golden chains and holding up empty hands to heaven, and a light shone on her face, and I saw that she was a strong and loving woman, and she ran with patience the race set before her, towards a goal which I could not see, but which shed upon her path an ever-growing light."

"Your dream was woven of our talk, of your thoughts for Deborah, and the words of our pastor, when he read and prayed with you yesterday. Yet it may be God's lesson to you, although we know of what it was woven."

"There is more to tell you, brother. My windows were open here, and in that deep silence just before the morning twilight, while all about me were sleeping, I heard two women walking by and talking; and their words came to me clearly on the night air. One said, 'I should be afraid to go out of this world burdened with the responsibility of millions. I should be afraid that when the Judge asked me how I had used my stewardship I must hang my head for shame.'

"'But if with the millions,' said the other, 'he had increased the grace, and you could say, "Lord, thy talent hath gained ten," then you would hear the words, "Well done!"' Perhaps they spoke of me."

"The great banker Wiltson was found dead in his private office yesterday," said Uncle Josiah. "I think they spoke of him."

"Perhaps; to his enormous fortune my wealth is but small, but as those women spoke, I thought that before my Judge I must hang my head for shame of unused talents, and I asked God to give me light for my child, so that she should hear, 'Well done.' Her mother, her grandmother, are, I am sure, in the city that hath foundations. Have I lived to forge bars to keep my daughter out?"

"Brother," said Josiah, "have courage; God will find a way."

After that, great peace fell on Mr. Grosvenor's heart, and concerning Deborah he rested. One evening he took his brother's hand. "You will stand by my dear girl, watch over her in her strange way—the way which God has found for her? Be to her father and mother, and do not let a hair of her head be injured!"

"That is as God wills," said Josiah; "I promise to do my best."

"She will be tried," said the dying father, "tried as by fire, cast into a crucible."

"And He who sits beside the crucible will one day see His own image reflected there," said Josiah firmly.

"God grant it! That indeed is worth the fires!"

In these months—they were three—Deborah and her father had at last become acquainted; they had grown sacredly dear to each other; Deborah had discovered that she had a heart.

That the earth may receive seed and bring forth harvests, it is in the spring-time torn with the ploughshare and made soft with showers. So oftentimes the heart, which is as an arid, fallow field, is rent by loss and sorrow and receives the rain of tears, and lo, harvests rise.

The three months were ended, and Mr. Grosvenor was carried to his grave.

"I have lost in my father my all," said Deborah.

She and Uncle Josiah were sitting in the library, in the twilight, and without the autumn rain dripped slowly; the cold drops seemed to be falling on Deborah's heart when she realized that they were pattering upon her father's grave!

"Yes, Deborah," answered her uncle, "and what you say is truer than you think. I have something to tell you, something that may be a hard and bitter surprise. Perhaps it will fall upon you less keenly if I tell it to you now, in an hour when the loss of your father makes all other losses seem trivial. My child, can you realize that you are a poor woman? Aside from your little personal possessions, your clothing, ornaments, jewels, and some furniture especially given to you in other years, you have not a dollar that you can call your own."

"What," said Deborah, "what, uncle! My father was rich!"

"He *was;* but, child, in a thousand ways riches can change hands, and his, as it might be by one stroke of the pen, by one revolution of business, left you with nothing. My dear, is this too hard to hear?"

Deborah rose up and drew a deep breath. She slowly paced up and down the room; she stopped before a long mirror, and by the red light in the grate saw herself dimly reflected there, a shape in black. What, had it come to this, that Deborah had but herself alone? Deborah who had always been counted with the millions—Deborah, divested of her millions, standing alone? As yet she could not comprehend it.

CHAPTER III.

THE OTHER HALF.

"Into this world we come like ships
Launched from the docks and stocks and slips
For fortune fair or fatal;
And one little craft is cast away
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
While another rides safe at Port Natal."

THE announcement of her changed circumstances for a moment startled and confused Miss Grosvenor. She did not comprehend how it could be. But she had never learned the worth of money by lacking it. She had not been contented, and she laid her discontent to the riches that surrounded her. Money had not made her happy, let it go! She looked at her uncle. "Do you mean that I shall have to give up the house and the servants and all that is here?"

"Yes, certainly."

"I don't know that I shall care much. I should have had to engage a chaperone, and no doubt she would have bored me. Where shall I live? Shall I get board at the Belmont? or at some private boarding-house? I believe there are boarding-houses right over here on the avenue."

There was once a queen of France who said, when she heard that the people were starving, that if she were in their place she would rather eat bread and cheese than starve. Miss Grosvenor was about as wise as her majesty. Poverty, to her, meant, in its deepest depths, boarding at fifteen or eighteen dollars a week. Uncle Josiah shook his head.

"My child, you have no money to pay your board at a hotel or a fashionable place. When I say you have *nothing* I mean that you will have to live in a poor way and earn your own living. I too am poor. Whatever I had has gone with my brother's fortune, except the merest trifle.

"However, we will remain together here in the city. I shall be a friend and protector for you and you will be a daughter for me. I can earn a little in my own behalf. As to this establishment, the sooner we give it up the better. The law allows you something; you will do well to look through the house with me and select what you had better keep. Also, you have a right to your own clothing, jewels, and all that has been personally given to you."

"Are there any debts unpaid?" asked Miss Grosvenor.

"I think there will be only the doctor's bill and the funeral expenses."

"If I am a poor woman my jewels, dresses, and laces will be out of place for me. I will sell them and pay those bills and put up a plain monument in our cemetery lot for my father."

Nurse Agnes Jamieson knocked at the door and entered.

"Have ye told her aboot it?" she asked.

"That I have no money?" said Deborah. "Yes. I am glad my father had money as long as he lived, and I hope he did not worry about me."

"No, he did not," said Uncle Josiah.

"There is no need to worry; other people make their living, and I suppose I can."

"My lassie, I ken there is guid metal in you. You will come oot o' the furnace like gold tried in the fire. Here I stan' to say that I bided wi' your gran'mither a' her life, an' so will I bide wi' you till God calls me. Here noo, my dear lass, I hae a little annuity fro' yer gran'-mither, a hunner a year. That will pay my rent o' a room, an I can bide wi ye an' Maister Josiah. I 'll do the wash for ye, an' I 'll eat o' your bite an' your sup. We 'll a' be thegither."

Nurse Jamieson had never showed for the stately and cold Miss Grosvenor the devotion which she now testified for the disinherited Deborah. Deborah was touched. She laid her hand on the dame's shoulder. "Surely I can take care of you, Jamieson. And, uncle, if I can, as you say, keep some things from the house, I will keep all that is in Jamieson's room, so that she will not find too great a change when she goes with me."

"I think," said Uncle Josiah, "that as Nurse Agnes understands more of practical life than you do, she had better select the articles that shall be saved. Our first affair will be a home."

"When I was in Paris," said Deborah, "I remember there was a quarter there called the 'St. Lazare,' or the Lazarus Quarter. I think it was only for the poor folks. Is there no Quarter St. Lazarus in this city? Let us find it and go there, if it is there that we belong."

"There is Lazarus Quarter enough," said her uncle, "but very little Saint about it."

"We maun help to make it mair saintly, by the grace o' God," said Nurse Jamieson.

Deborah and her uncle walked slowly through the great, silent, darkened house. Miss Grosvenor pointed to some things as articles which, if she had a fitting place, she would have really liked to keep. Some of the articles had associations connected with them to which she clung. "I shall be sorry to part with those," she said; "for the rest I do not care at all. Let them go; they only remind me of weariness, hollowness, and sham."

Then in looking over her jewelry, a mass of splendid and useless ornaments, she selected a few things which had belonged to her own mother, and the first watch, given her when she was ten years old, by her father. "I want to keep these."

"Very good," said her uncle; "the watch you will need, and it is not a dangerously valuable one. The jewels are not fit for the Lazarus Quarter. I will put them in the hands of a banker whom I know in the country, and he will take care of them for you. You must save out also the best sewing-machine."

"A sewing-machine!" cried Miss Grosvenor. "Why I never sewed a yard on one! I do n't know how to run it. What use will it be?"

"You will have to learn to run it, or how will you get your clothes made? Remember you are poor. And by the way, Deborah, how do you expect to make a living?"

"I do n't know," said Deborah blankly.

"Can you teach music, French, painting, kindergarten?"

"No! I know nothing of all that," cried Deborah.

"Can you keep books? Can you make bonnets or gowns?"

"No, of course not. In fact, I know nothing useful."

"Suppose it was work or starve, what could you do?"

"I think," said Deborah, after a little consideration, "that I might be a 'fitter on' in some big establishment, if they thought it would bring a crowd to see the millionaire Miss Grosvenor earning her bread; or I could teach dancing, if I could find a place. Absolutely that is all I know. I do n't care to do either of those things. I want at last to do something useful. Uncle, there has been a grand mistake, that a person possessed of all natural faculties, time, and money, has gone through twenty-one years without learning one useful thing! I was reading in my Bible this morning about the barren fig-tree. I am that barren tree; I am sure of it. No good works have grown in my life, no graces in my heart. I wonder it was not said of me, 'Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?'"

"It was said rather to dig about the roots, and prune and trim it, and see if it would not bear a noble crop. The digging and pruning may go hard with you, Deborah. You may have a bitter apprenticeship in learning how the other half of the world lives."

"I saw a tree once," said Miss Grosvenor, "that had been killed by having a very luxuriant vine grow over it. The vine had strangled the tree. Perhaps I shall have a better chance without any money. What is that about riches laid up to the owner's hurt?"

"It is indeed said that riches laid up for selfish enjoyment are for one's hurt, also that the 'love of money is the root of all evil.' But the possession of money may be a great blessing when riches are consecrated to God and used in his service; then they bring joy and largeness of heart to their possessor and to those whom he has wisely helped.

"It seems strange to me, Deborah, that in a city where there are many godly people who are rich, and who consecrate their time, money, influence, all that they have, to the service of God and their fellows, you have never met any of them or so mingled with them as to be stimulated and helped upward by their example. Why is it?"

"Because we were so worldly that I suppose they thought no good could be done to us or by us. Mrs. Grosvenor, you know, was rather opposed to religion and religious people; she seldom went to church, and was not very cordial to our pastor. Our church is called, I think, the most worldly in all the city. I think our way of life and our pleasures are such as good people generally condemn. The Christian Temperance women came about us a little, but Mrs. Grosvenor was determined to use wine at her parties and called them cranks for opposing it. The Foreign Missionary Society came after us a few times, to get us to help; but she said that she did n't believe in Foreign Missions; there were heathen enough at home."

"Well, what did you do for the home heathen?"

"Nothing: she said charity pauperized people, and if they were not shiftless and lazy they would not be in need. Besides, father was liberal, and he always put his check in the plate for fifty or a hundred dollars at each collection."

"Is it right to lay the blame all on Mrs. Grosvenor? You had money in your own purse; your time was at your own disposal; you were capable, as a reasonable being, of forming your own opinions."

"I know I have been to blame; and now it is too late to mend it. I wake up to know that I am poor and must work for myself; now I cannot give or work for others, even if I wish it. Some day I may wish I had my fortune back, to make better use of it."

"I dare say you may," said Uncle Josiah dryly. "Like flows to like in this world, my child, and it seems to me if you had had a real love of God and hunger for his presence, you would have affiliated more with his people."

"But, uncle, I had no such love and hunger for God. I have so little soul-life that sometimes I suspect I have none at all."

"Dissatisfaction with that state is however a hopeful sign," he replied.

A few days after this Uncle Josiah told Deborah that he had found a home for them in the Lazarus Quarter — three rooms in the second story of a house in a quiet court. "I have ordered a man to put two coats of whitewash on the walls, and a washerwoman who lives on the third floor is to give them a thorough scrubbing with carbolic soap and lye. After that I shall put three coats of paint on the floors and woodwork. I had better spend some of my little in putting the rooms into as good hygienic order as possible. There is water in the largest room, and they have the sun."

"Three rooms to live in for three of us!—to eat and sleep and all that!" cried Deborah. "But perhaps we are to take our meals out."

"Nurse Jamieson will cook them for us in the largest room, which will be our dining-room, sitting-room, and kitchen, and I shall sleep there on a lounge, which can be turned into a bed. One of the other rooms will be for you, and one for Jamieson."

"I never heard of anything so dreadful," said Deborah frankly.

"Why, child, often a whole family lives in one room. All the other families in that house have only two rooms apiece, and some of the families have six or seven members. Three rooms for three is luxury."

"Why did n't you put a little gold-paper on the walls? Is n't whitewash horrible stuff?" said Deborah.

"It is very healthful stuff, and I put it on the walls as a sanitary measure. Besides, we are now done with gold."

"Three rooms—whitewash!" said Deborah, confounded.

"I am going myself to put the paint on," said Uncle Josiah very cheerfully, "to-morrow morning; suppose you go with me. Borrow an apron from Nurse Jamieson, and take a pair of old gloves with you. Perhaps you may find something to do, and you can get acquainted with your neighbors."

Next morning Deborah set off with her uncle in tolerably good spirits. They found a big, blue-eyed, fair-skinned Swede woman washing the last of the windows. "I could not get done the last night," she said, "my baby was so cross. He cuts his toofs."

"This is the young lady who is going to live here with me and our old friend, Mrs. Jamieson," said Uncle Josiah.

The woman gave Deborah a critical survey. "Poor young lady, it will not suit she at all. I am sorry she has lost her money."

"I did not care for it," said Deborah calmly.

"Ach! what an idea! But you will care for it now it's gone, *much!*"

"I don't see that these rooms have any bath-room," said Miss Grosvenor, still in the queenly condition of being unable to understand the status of the masses and their surroundings.

The washerwoman laughed openly. "The like of we, miss, never has bath-rooms. If we have a bit of a bowl, or perhaps the wash-tub, and the matter of a curtain, so we can take a wash, we get on well indeed. But here, why you have a room all to yourself!"

A room! Miss Grosvenor had always had undisputed possession of three, besides the general use of the house and the constant occupation of the drawing-rooms. She sighed and gave up the problem of how people lived. Uncle Josiah was painting.

"I believe I could do that," said Deborah with interest.

"I believe you could: take a brush and a can and try. See how I handle the brush. Don't get the paint on your apron, and don't drop more than you put on the wood. Try that base-board."

Miss Grosvenor was usefully employed for the first time in her life. There was a clatter of little feet and a fat child came in. "Moder!

The baby have roll on his face, an I des tan't pick he up."

"Make your manners to the lady, Berta. I 'll come soon enough."

"Do you let that little child run on the stairs alone? I should think she would fall!" said Deborah, who had seen children followed up by nurses until they were nine or ten years old.

"You know not much about our ways, miss," said Mrs. Werner with a hearty laugh. "That leetle schild does all my errands, an' she takes care of the baby when I work. I have five older ones, but one is hired out—she is fifteen; and the next four goes to school, and in vacation they are cash boys. Poor folks' children, miss, begins to work young."

Mrs. Werner was scouring the doors as she spoke. The doors being open, Deborah heard a constant loud groaning, that now and then rose to little shrill cries.

"What is that dreadful noise!" she exclaimed.

"You wont hear it in a minute, miss, when I shuts the door," said Mrs. Werner. "It 's poor old Mrs. Kegan. She has rheumatiz that bad, she just hollers and moans. Poor soul, I do pity her, lying alone. You see when these cold, chilly nights and mornings come, she do get mighty bad, for she has no flannels and no blankets. Summers she 's better."

"Why does n't she get some flannels and blankets, instead of suffering that way? or why does n't some one get them for her?"

Again Mrs. Werner laughed: she found Dives' daughter a very amusing young lady. "Why, miss, it 's the *money;* flannels is so dear! She 's got no money for it, and none of us is rich enough to buy them for her, poor heart!"

Then came a gleam of sense to Dives' daughter. "I supposed that there were people—city missionaries or charitable folks—to see after such cases and get things for poor folks."

"Ach yes, there are; but they are like poor people's bread and potatoes, not enough to go round often. And they go to the poorest parts of the city and to those who apply at the public sharities. Now here, miss, we are very respectable; we are all in regular work and support ourselves, and our court is very comfortable; so we none of us ever go near the sharities, except now and then I ask for extra work when work is slack. The people who go about giving things go to the real poor folks and the very bad streets and courts."

More amazement on the part of Miss Grosvenor. "What! Are there poorer people than here—poorer places than this?"

"She don't know much about it, do she?" said Mrs. Werner, appealing to Uncle Josiah. "Why, miss, here 's comfort."

But Deborah's mind had gone back to Mrs. Kegan. "How long has that poor creature been suffering for flannels?"

"She 's been pretty bad every winter for five years, ever since I came to this house. I do n't move much," said Mrs. Werner.

"Uncle, she has been moaning and suffering for five years for want of flannels, while up in one of our attics there are all kinds of woollen goods, wrappers and shawls and blankets, and no end of things, just laid by for no one. There is something very wrong in that."

"I think there *is*," said Uncle Josiah decidedly.

"You see, miss, them as has and them as wants do not often get together, and them as goes round begging for it are most often greedy ones who do n't deserve," said Mrs. Werner, hastening to explain matters.

"I think, uncle, I have a right to what in the attic has ever been mine," suggested Deborah.

"You have a right to all that is in the attic, I am sure."

The attic suddenly rose before Deborah's fancy as an Aladdin's cave. She had gone up there now and then, looking for things for private theatricals, when she and her friends were making desperate efforts to amuse themselves. Now the second-hand stuff there seemed wealth. Flannels! blankets! cushions! toys—so many toys with which she had once played. She thought this round-eyed Werner mite would be joyful over those toys and picture-books. She was about to promise them lavishly when a baby's scream sounded down the stairs, and Mrs. Werner and little Berta incontinently disappeared.

"Uncle," said Deborah, picking up her paint-brush, "there are oceans of toys in the attic I can give to that child."

Uncle Josiah laughed. "Promiscuous and lavish giving will be as bad as withholding. The children of the poor are made not for toys but for affairs. One doll would be wealth to that child. It is the sick children for whom toys must be kept. All those in your attic should long ago have gone to the Children's Hospital."

CHAPTER IV.

PURPLE AND FINE LINEN.

"Not so the infant Killmansegg:
She was not born to steal or beg
Or gather cresses in ditches,
To plait the straw or bind the shoe,
Or sit all day to hem or sew."

WHEN the news spread that the supposed vast wealth of Dives had somehow vanished, that the house and its splendid furnishings, the silver and the pictures, the horses and carriages, were to go under the hammer of the auctioneer, great was the amazement of the golden friends of golden hours who had trodden with Dives and his house the circle of fashionable pleasures.

"Miss Grosvenor left nothing! What will she do?"

"She has that queer old uncle; he may take care of her."

"They say he is as poor as she is."

"Dear, dear! There ought to be some provision made by Government for suddenly impoverished young ladies. They are the most helpless creatures! What can she do? She can't do anything! Has she talent for the stage?"

"The stage! That cold, unbending, icy, discontented girl! The idea of her playing Juliet or Bianca! And then, unless one is a genius, a prodigious genius, the stage is the work of a life-time training. Why do n't you ask if she cannot take to the concert boards or the opera at once, and be a diva, like Patti? And after all, what *is* there to do for such women?"

"Nothing: she would be refused even as chambermaid or waitress, without any experience. Poor soul. She 'd better be dead."

Thus those who had known her and hovered about her in the days of her prosperity. They were really sorry for her, very sorry--but they did n't know what to do about it. They did not know how to advise her or help her; and it was very wearing to see a person in such a hopeless case. If it had been only the death of her parents, they could have gone and condoled with her properly, for then she would have had open to her the comfort that is to be found in travelling and in becoming mourning and the distractions of using her wealth. But what comfort can one find in poverty? That situation is too desperate! The dear five hundred left cards at Dives' soon-to-be-closed doors, and rolled away in their carriages without offering to call. Some—many--forgot even to leave cards. Three or four gentlemen, friends of Dives, called on Uncle Josiah and asked if they could do anything for Miss Grosvenor—"This was a very sad case indeed."

Uncle Josiah said he knew nothing that they could do just then; he did not expect to let his niece suffer. She would earn her bread, as many other women had to, and possibly he might some day call on them for a little influence or a recommendation in the way of bread-winning.

One old gentleman shook his head. "'Nothing in God's universe is so helpless, so unutterably helpless, as a rich woman, taught to do nothing, suddenly become poor. The smallest birds, the butterflies, the caterpillars, that we call defenceless and helpless, are less helpless than she, because their wants and needs are less, and they know how to supply them. What is there that Miss Grosvenor has strength or knowledge or aptitude for? Nothing. There are homes and refuges here and there for old ladies of fallen fortunes, nothing for young ladies."

One or two elderly ladies called and lamented to Miss Grosvenor that she had not married. "You have refused so many good offers. Now if you were married, you would be safe even if your father's fortune is lost. You had far better take somebody now, and settle yourself."

"My suitors are all gone with my money," said Deborah. "Not the face of an eligible young man has appeared since the first hints of ruin! I am glad I am not married."

"What a pity that you have been so cold hearted, Miss Grosvenor!"

"Even that is better than marriage for mercenary motives. I think in that respect I have had high ideals," smiled Deborah.

"High ideals are well enough for rich people, but poor folks cannot indulge in them."

Then one old lady invited her to come and visit her for a year; another suggested that she might give her board and clothes, if she acted as reader, scribe, and companion.

"I might be thankful to take the offer," said Deborah, "only my uncle and I are going to stay together and take care of each other."

"Oh, if your uncle is responsible for you!" And the old ladies were very much relieved.

Among the life-long acquaintances of Miss Grosvenor was one with whom she had been least intimate, Miss Leila Stirling. Miss Stirling had joined the church when Deborah did. Her sister had been one of those whose sudden death in the midst of festivities had called a halt among the golden youth who lived to pursue pleasure. The change at that point in her career in Miss Stirling had been deep and last-ing—a new life had begun: her old companions felt rebuked by the simplicity and devotion of this newness of life into which she had passed. Some way she was out of harmony with many of them. Delicate health and the demands made upon her time by a bereaved and invalid mother had further separated her from former friends. She had always seemed to cling to Deborah Grosvenor and admire her, but had she not made three calls to Deborah's one, they would have lost sight of each other. At the first news of Deborah's loss of fortune Leila Stirling came to see her. She was a warm-hearted, enthusiastic girl, overflowing with sympathy. "Dear Deborah, you do n't know how much I have always loved you. You seemed to me like my sister that died. I never dared show you how much I cared for you, because I somehow fancied that you did not wish affection. I wish you 'd come and live with me, dear Deborah. Mamma has plenty of money for both of us. She would be better off with another daughter. We are going to South France for mamma's health. Wont you go with us? Come; we will have all things in common, and you are so very much wiser and more dignified than I am, you will be such a help to me. Why I cannot go away and leave you here with such changed fortune. What can you do?"

"I don't know. But I shall find something as others do."

"I'm afraid the others don't find it always, and, Deborah, you are not made for a hard life."

"I don't see why I am not made for it as much as others are. I find by studying the matter that more than half, yes, more than three-quarters, of the whole number of civilized women are working women. Now I too must be a working woman; I belong to the majority."

"It would be far different if you had been brought up to it. Then privations would by habit have become easier, and you would have learned something to do. Now you know nothing. I am sure, Deborah, that it is very wrong to bring up women as you and I have been brought up, to know no useful and proper way of making a living. We are left perfectly helpless, and the mere accident of losing our money makes us beggars and miserable. If we felt the serene independence of knowing something to do, how much stronger and better off we should be."

"Well, now I have my chance, Leila, and I am going to learn to do something."

"Come to me, dear, while you are learning."

"That would be to go to a life which would make useful learning impossible. I should go to you to drift, as I have drifted. No; now I shall learn to work for myself and to understand and sympathize with other wage-workers."

"The ancient Hebrews considered it one of the first duties of a father to see that every one of his sons was taught a useful trade so that he could always earn his own bread. Paul, you will remember, was a tent-maker. I wish parents now-a-days felt it a duty to teach every daughter a means of honorable self-support. But, Deborah, if you would come and live with me you would still need to do nothing."

"I believe I no longer crave that exemption from labor. I have already had a glimpse of my working sisters. I shall go down among them to learn how they live and how they suffer. The truth is, Leila, I have been a heartless idler all my life; I did n't know that I could be anything better. I am sick to death of this empty idleness. I never have had any real satisfaction in it, and now I mean to see if there is anything better on the hard-working side of life. I have done nothing all my days for God or humanity. I have not grown, I have shrunk. I remember long ago, when I was a child, I thought of the poor and the suffering and wanted to help them. Then I grew selfish, forgot all about others, and cared only for myself. I can see nothing less like Christ than such a life as I have led, so selfish, so trivial! God has taken away the riches in which I trusted and shaken me out of this home where I have considered only my own ease. Perhaps I shall learn to feel for others only by sharing their hard lot. At all events, Leila, thank you for your kind offer, but until I have tried to help myself and failed utterly, until I have learned by experience something of the hardness of life, I cannot take that offer."

"You look so unfitted for that hard life," sighed Leila.

"I am perfectly healthy, and twenty-one, in possession of all my faculties. I have Uncle Josiah and Nurse Jamieson to keep me from being all alone in the world. I think I begin with as fair a chance as any one could."

"But what will you do, dear girl?"

"I do n't know. I shall look for work. That is one of the experiences of working women. It will be hard. That will serve me right. Have I ever cared for or sympathized with or tried to help women who were looking for work? I have been abominably selfish."

Leila rose up and kissed her. "I am sorry I am going away. But the doctor has ordered mamma to leave at once. You will write to me, dear Deborah? You will let me help you, give to you, lend to you; treat me like a sister, will you not?"

Deborah looked her in the face and laughed.

She would not promise. She was a proud girl: defeat confessed would be ten times defeat. She would take her chances with other workers.

Leila wrung her hands. "You 'll have a dreadful time! What is there for women to do? To stand in stores? To sew? You do n't know how to sew, do you, Deborah? I do n't. I embroider a little."

"Nurse Jamieson says, 'He is worth no weel who can bide no woe,'" replied Deborah. "Now I can show what I am made of."

"You will show that you are made of all that is good and noble and true!" cried Leila; "and, Deborah, already I see that troubles have made you better. I never before heard you speak of trying to do your duty or to be like Christ. If these afflictions work out for you the exceeding weight of glory, it will be worth the suffering to win the crown. The way of the cross is the way of light. 'This is the way the Master went; shall not the servant tread it still?' Dear Deborah, now I feel nearer to you than ever. We can now help one another on in the Christian life. You will be where you can see what help is needed, and you can let me give it. I am now shut out from anything but waiting upon and comforting mamma, and if there is any work for me among the poor and suffering I must be helped to it by you. Write to me often."

And so this friend went away, and Deborah reflected on the fact that the acquaintance who had been steadfast and true was the Christian, the one whom she had avoided as "too pious" and as "given to preachments."

Deborah was a reticent girl, and hitherto her affections had been given little scope. Leila was warm hearted and effusive; Deborah had never been able to appreciate or understand her, but now she was touched. Leila sailed for Europe. The last day in the house of Dives came. Nurse Jamieson had set in order the little home in the Lazarus Quarter. The daughter of Dives was divested of all her splendors: her jewels, laces, and rich raiment were sold; all her fine furniture and pretty ornaments and curios were gone; a half-dozen or so of books, a couple of engravings, a bird, a few pots of plants, the simplest of black garments—these only were left her.

The treasures of the attic had been taken charge of by Uncle Josiah, who said that he knew a place where he could keep them and get them out as they were needed. The daughter of Dives passed from her life-long splendors, from her purple and fine linen, to the abodes of Lazarus.

The people of Romaine Court were all excitement about the rich, stately young lady who had become poor and with her old nurse and uncle had come to live among them. Already she stood high in their opinion as a Lady Bountiful, for Mrs. Kegan had received from her blankets, flannels, a big softly-cushioned chair, a shawl, and a double flannel wrapper. Little Berta Werner had exhibited to admiring neighbors a large doll, with real hair and eyes that opened and shut.

"Why did n't she play with the doll?" Deborah had asked, seeing the waxen wonder left to sit in state on a corner shelf.

"Play wis it!" cried the industrious infant in amazement; "I 've got ze baby to tate tare of. But I loves to look at it. It is prettier zan ze baby."

Evidently, thought the people of Romaine Court, a lady who could give away so much, who was not obliged to sell such treasures or send them to the pawnbroker, could not be very poor.

As for Deborah, she moved into her new abode, and spent an hour in contemplating in heartsick horror its bareness, desolation, and poverty. Where in that home of splendor had Nurse Jamieson found such plain, queer, shabby furniture? How could one live without any of the comforts and conveniences of life?

She heard a voice in the hall. "Hey, Miss Gibbs, how are you to-day? Them new folks, the rich ones, have come. Mis' Werner had their key, and she let me peek in this morning into their rooms. A'n't they splendid! Just elegant! Folks ought to be pretty contented that can have three rooms, as well set up as that. I 'd be more 'n thankful for one half as good. I do n't reckon we 'll see much of Miss. 'T a'n't likely she 'll 'sociate with we. But then she 's been mighty kind to poor Mis' Kegan."

Well, sure enough, there are two sides to the shield. Deborah rose up and set herself to making the most of her forlorn surroundings. She put plants, books, pictures in the best places, arranged and re-arranged the furniture. Her native taste came to the rescue; the neatness achieved by dame Agnes was supplemented by Miss Grosvenor's skill, and a look of home and comfort came into the three rooms.

It was tea-time; Nurse Jamieson made tea and toast and fried some potatoes. Never had Deborah seen a meal so plain. When the table was set, near the cooking-stove, Deborah went to the little closet and took out a third plate, cup, and saucer.

"Nurse," she said, "we are all one family here; you and I are both working women now, and we will eat together. I know what I want; do n't object to it."

"She is right," said Uncle Josiah.

Nurse Jamieson looked at Deborah with tears in her eyes. "It is a' too hard for her!" she exclaimed. "Maister Josiah, it is no right that my puir lassie should be tried so far!"

"It is all right," said Uncle Josiah; "in comparison with three-fourths of the working-girls Deborah is well off."

"Weel," said Agnes, "far sought and dear bought is guid for ladies."

"A lady," said Deborah, "is, Webster tells us, a person of good manners, who dresses well. If that is true I have been always a lady. Now, if I cannot earn enough to be well dressed, I must cease to be a lady, I suppose. I 'd rather get something to do, and be truly a working woman. I like to know what I really am, and be what I pretend to be. Uncle, have *you* found any work?"

"Yes; a gentleman that I know is going to pay me a small salary for going about as a sort of city missionary, or colporter, or Bible-man. I am going to open a room in the worst neighborhood that I can find, and provide advice, shelter, religious instruction; help to find work for idlers; have open a prayer-meeting at noon and at seven o'clock in the evening; keep up a Sunday breakfast and a Sunday service and a Bible school; in short, to try what effect on sweetening the Marah waters some leaves from the tree of Life will have, if cast among them. Do you think, Deborah, you could be a Bible-woman along with me?"

"Decidedly no, uncle. I know very little about making my living, but I do know enough to be honest. A Bible-woman ought to have some religious experiences—I have almost none. A Bible-woman ought to know something about poverty and ways and means. I know absolutely nothing of all this. I could n't tell a poor woman how to make money or how to save money: I know neither of these things myself. A Bible-woman ought, I suppose, to be able to tell people how to make a poultice or gruel or a mustard plaster. All I know of doing such things is to say, 'Call the cook or the housekeeper.' I suppose a Bible-woman should be able to dress a burn or a sore finger, or to show a person how to mend or make a garment, or how to make a meal of nothing and have something left over. Do I know any of these things? Evidently not. I shall not try to cheat God and my neighbor by setting up as a Bible-woman."

"That is good sound sense," said her uncle; "but having sense to feel these things, perhaps you have more aptitude for visiting the poor than you imagine. However, you had better seek other work."

The next day Deborah concluded she would test herself in the matter of visiting the poor.

She reported at evening to her uncle that she had been to see old Mrs. Kegan, found the room dirty and ill-smelling, the old woman querulous, felt disgusted with both room and woman, and had fled in five minutes. Then she went to see Mrs. Werner; there she found soap-suds, a crying baby, and a pile of soiled clothes. She felt faint in the smell of suds, the soiled garments made her ill, she could not smile at the baby, much less touch or kiss it, because its face was dirty; she wanted to shake Berta for having her apron torn, her shoes untied, her hair frowsy. As for loving folks who were not "nicer," it was impossible.

"Behold my gifts as a helper of my kind!" said Deborah.

"The gifts will grow as you recognize the deficiencies. However, now we must find you some other kind of work. Twenty dollars a month seems to be a necessity."

"Twenty dollars! Why that will be easy enough to get, I am sure!"

CHAPTER V.

AT THE GATE.

"And the other sex, the tender, the fair,
What wide reverses of fate are there!
While Margaret, charmed by the bulbul rare,
In a garden of Gul reposes,
Poor Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street,
Till—think of it, ye who find life so sweet—
She hates the smell of roses!"

"WHAT do you expect me to do with twenty dollars a month?" asked Deborah, not particularly eager to eat toast and fried potatoes.

"Why, support yourself, my dear child," said her uncle. "Nurse Jamieson has ninety-six dollars a year; she will do all our domestic work, and get in return her food, fire, and shelter. Her little annuity will provide for the rest of her wants. My salary is thirty dollars a month. Out of that I mean to clothe myself and provide our food. I look to you to earn twenty dollars a month, and so provide your clothing and pay the eight dollars a month of rent."

Miss Grosvenor was aghast. "Clothe myself for twelve dollars a month! However, I shall not need clothes for a long time. But, uncle, surely the wages of a grown person should be more than twenty dollars a month, if she has no board and lodging provided. We can't live on what you suggest."

"What do you suppose Mrs. Werner and her six, yes, seven children, live on?" said Uncle Josiah. "The girl at service gets two dollars a week: one she keeps for clothing, one she gives to her mother. When Mrs. Werner works all the time her profit on her washing is five dollars a week: of course she has the use of her fire for her own work and comfort. Her rent is a dollar and a half a week. Then she has four dollars and a half to feed and clothe herself and six children.

"During four months of yearly vacation the four children who go to school get each a dollar a week as 'cash' in a store. That is her harvest-time for laying up money for clothes, bedding, furniture. How is that?"

"I never dreamed of such poverty," said Deborah.

"It is affluence compared to the lot of many. You think twenty dollars a month small wages? I named that to encourage you. Three dollars a week, two dollars, or two and a half, that is what the majority of your working sisters get. More than that is to be earned only by experience or by dangerous or unhealthy occupations."

"At all events it is worth something to

know all this. I will begin on Monday to search for work," said Deborah.

"Meanwhile, on Sunday, I want you and Nurse Jamieson to come in the afternoon to my mission, in the slums, and each teach a Bible-class."

"Why, uncle, I never taught but one month, and I was a terrible failure. I shall do no manner of good," said Miss Grosvenor.

"You will be better than nobody; you can read," said her uncle grimly.

"Dear child," said Dame Jamieson, "we can tell what the Lord has done for us; and we can read the good Buik to them."

"Besides, Deborah, I look to you for my music," said Uncle Josiah. "I have a little parlor-organ down there, and some gospel hymns, and I expect you to play the accompaniments and lead the singing. Singing will be a chief feature in getting my audience together. They will not be critical as to quality, but they like it loud and plenty of it. As we are too far off to go to your church, and you have come to live in Romaine Court, we shall go to this little mission church around the corner, and I hope we shall be a real help to them there."

Monday morning Deborah bought several newspapers and looked at "Help Wanted—Females." She found demands for house servants, laundresses, waitresses, a forewoman or two in factories, women with experience, a bookkeeper, a buttonhole-maker of skill for a tailor's establishment dress-makers' and milliners' hands, with experience, a bookkeeper for a restaurant, a skilled worker on a sewing-machine. Nothing in all this for Deborah. She went to the secretary of the "Public Charities" and registered "for work." As there was no particular kind of work that she could do, the secretary gave her very little encouragement. However she left her name. Then she went to the "Young Women's Christian Association" and made an application. Could she teach, do foreign correspondence, was she a stenographer, a good type-writer? No: nothing of this. "And you cannot take less than twenty dollars a month? You can hardly get such high wages unless you really know some kind of work."

High wages! Deborah caught her breath. She left her application. But she was proud, reticent, well dressed. The secretary did not consider it a case of extremity, and though her name stood on the books, no further attention was paid to it. Next to the "Women's Protective and Educational Society," and again she was told that "work was scarce, competition great; she would have a better chance to make a living if she really knew how to do something. If she had any needlework or art-work to leave to be sold, meanwhile, she was welcome to do so." As she walked, sad and discouraged, towards Romaine Court she saw the sign of a private "Office for Ladies' Employments," and went in. She was assured that work was plenty and a nice place with a good salary could be found for her at once, if she registered and left two dollars "for expenses." She left the two dollars; she also called at that office nine times within the next three weeks, but no position was ever found for her.

For a whole week Deborah had been seeking work without success, and was now thoroughly weary and discouraged. One morning she found an advertisement in the paper which read as if it might suit. She showed it to Nurse Jamieson.

"I suppose I must go; but it is so far up town, and I am so tired of failing."

"My puir lambie! See now, you bide here, and I 'll go for you. If there is aught in it I can get ye the chance o' it."

Deborah first refused, then yielded. At the end of three hours Dame Agnes came back, red-faced and furious.

"Did you get me anything?" demanded Deborah.

"It was a wicked trap!" cried Agnes. "My lambie, ye shanna answer advertisements save to open business places. The guid Lord ha' mercy on a wicked warld! I just went to the police office an' made my complaint, but there 's no knowing what guid it will do."

Deborah went and lay down in her room and cried.

Another week of search, and she found a situation in a little office, up three flights of stairs, the work directing envelopes, wages two dollars and a half a week. "I am bound to do something, and this will pay the rent," said Deborah.

"I don't like you to take that, but you can try it, if you tell me exactly how you get on," said her uncle.

At the end of a week Deborah reported that her employer, a rough, untidy man, smoked all day long and filled the close little den with such vile smoke that it made her ill; he and his business visitors swore openly and loudly, and finally he had called her "Sis."

"You shall not go back there," said Uncle Josiah, "not for an hour. But do not forget that there are girls who would be obliged to go and submit to all that, or they would have no pittance for either bed or bread."

The next week Deborah was angry against her fortunes. She sat and moped; she scarcely spoke or ate. She hated her neighborhood, her poor abode, her poverty. She was miserable—not because there were others just as badly off as she, and many worse off—but miserable simply and solely on account of Deborah Grosvenor. Her uncle sat down by her and took her hand.

"My dear, do you remember what Charles Kingsley wrote: 'If you want to be miserable think about yourself—about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and what people think of you.' That way of thinking made you miserable when you were rich, it can make you miserable now that you are poor. Listen to me, and I will tell you what I have seen. I have found a crippled child, a boy of eight, whose mother leaves him at half-past six in the morning, and he is alone for nearly or full twelve hours. She puts some water, bread, cold meat or potatoes, at his hand, and there he lies, no window but one in the roof, no friends, no amusements, no toys. Think of that life for a little sick child! I have found a little lame girl of twelve who takes care of six younger children, doing all the housework and washing, while the mother is out all day with a basket of fruit and the father is in the penitentiary. I have found a poor woman who fell and broke her arm in two places while she was cleaning a store window. She cannot go to a hospital, as she has year-old twins. Her husband has long been sick, and can now do but light work. Three dollars and a half a week is all their income, and most of their bedding has been pawned, so they suffer with cold. I want you to make my rounds with me to-morrow, as you do not have success in finding work."

Next day Miss Grosvenor went out with her uncle. December had come and the weather was cold, damp, lowering. The chilly wind, the mud, the mist, made the wretched abodes of the poor seem more dismal than usual. It was a day that Deborah always remembered, because it was her first contact with real, hopeless, grinding poverty. She forgot herself and her troubles; she was filled with a longing to do something to relieve this abject misery.

"Uncle," she said in the evening, "what have you done with those things from our attic? I am sure there were some thick quilts and a dress or two that could be given to that poor woman whose arm is broken. I want some of my toys for that dear little cripple boy; and is n't there something to make life easier for that poor child who is house-mother to that uproarious little crew?"

"I 've no doubt that there are all these things, and at this rate we shall soon give away all that there was in the attic."

"Give it then. It has been withheld too

long; it will save your friend the trouble of storing the stuff. Oh why did not some one take me to see such need when I was rich and could have helped it!" cried Deborah.

The next day at noon Nurse Jamieson said, "My dearie, will you take a pitcher of soup to the woman who lives in the attic of the last house in our court? She has pneumonia and has no one to take care of her but a child seven years old. I have been doing a little for her every day."

Deborah went off with the pitcher. She was gone some time. When she came back she said, "I combed her hair and made her bed, dusted her room and fed her the soup. I think we should have enough careful district nurses to supply all such cases. How the sick poor are neglected!" But she could not eat any dinner; it takes one a long time to get accustomed to the sights, sounds, and smells of the homes of sickness and poverty.

Seeing how she was affected, Uncle Josiah said to her, "Deborah, perhaps this is too much for you. You know it is open to you to go to Miss Stirling, or to take that place that old Mrs. Crane offered you, as companion. Nurse Jamieson and I could stay here, and you could come to see us sometimes."

"No," said Deborah, "my health is not yet hurt one particle, and I am resolved to make my living here among the poor. I now want to know what my working sisters need and what is to be done for them. Perhaps, after I have had experience, I may be able to show other people, like Leila Stirling, what to do for the city working-women. It is too soon to confess myself beaten ; I will still persevere. I can ask Mrs. Werner and Mrs. Kegan if they know how I can get work. I have still some money in my purse."

That money in Deborah's purse dwindled suddenly next day, for Mrs. Werner, with tears in her eyes, told Nurse Jamieson of a friend of hers, a widow with a sick daughter, who had been served with a dispossess warrant, because she could not pay her rent in one room, on a street near them. Mrs. Werner had no idea that any help could be given, but just poured out to Nurse Jamieson the sympathetic sorrow of her heart. The tale seemed to Deborah so harrowing that she put on her hat and ran round to the place indicated, where she found men putting women and furniture into the street. She paid the three dollars in arrears and also two dollars in advance, and left the poor "slop-sewers" blessing her for shelter.

"But your purse is now nearly empty," said her uncle.

"That does not matter. It is worth something to have found out that I have a heart; that I can weep with those that weep. There is a little of the blood of the great Christian family in me still, I see, and I believe I am following Christ."

That evening Mrs. Kegan's grandson, who supported her, came to the door to say that "Miss could get a place where he worked in a rubber-shoe factory, in the pasting-room. Experience was not needed; the work was hard and dirty, wages three dollars a week, rising to four."

"I will take it," said Deborah, though Uncle Josiah remonstrated that such work was hardly the right kind for her. "It will be time enough to stop if I get something better or find that this hurts me."

Admitted next day to the "rubber-factory," Deborah found a large ill-lighted room, the air loaded with the smell of benzine, where twenty big girls, in very dirty sacking aprons, were pasting at long tables. The fine, small hands of Dives' daughter had much ado to manage the big sticky brush that was committed to her; her collar and the large gingham apron of Nurse Jamieson were considered very sumptuous, and she was treated to most inquisitive looks and pressing questions by her fellow-workwomen.

"Are you the lady Dick Kegan says has lost all her money?" "Are you really come down poor?" "I 'd have gone and drowned myself." "This will kill you. Not one in a hundred can stand the benzine." "Her hands will give out first."

Presently a short girl, with very black eyes and hair and a handsome, gypsy-like face, came in. There was a chorus of exclamations: "Oh, Maggie! How 's your hand?" "Did you have your finger cut off?" "Have you come into a fortune?" "Is n't that a new bonnet you have?" "Whew! you must be in luck ;what a nice dress you have on!" "Let 's see your hand. Had the finger cut open!" "Well, that 's better than amputation. Amputation means starvation to us working-girls." Thus spoke the girls as they worked.

"Girls!" cried the young forewoman, "you must go on with your work."

"Oh we are! Tell us your news, Maggie."

"Only I 'm back with my mistress, the lady I lived with, and left to make three dollars a week here, like a fool. You see I would not have my finger cut off; but it 's been bad so long, with medicine and board and all that, I was clean out of money, and sick and nearly wild, when I met the young lady in the street, and she made me come right home with her. So my mistress said for me to stay at once, at the old wages, and I told her I was n't worth them, with such a hand. And I told her I had no decent clothes left. But she said to come along and do as well as I could. The young lady made me two bonnets, this and another; and her mother gave me this dress, and a calico, and six aprons. And if ever I leave them again, it will be when my senses leave me. I am out on an errand and stopped in a minute while I had to wait."

"What was wrong with her hand?" asked Deborah, when Maggie had left.

"Felon—an awful bad felon; we many of us get felons, from hard pressing on the paste-brush, or rubbing hard on the cloth, as we have to, with our hands. Maggie got hers five months ago. She 's had a dreadful time, but it is not always one finds a nice lady to help you out."

"She 's better off by half at service," said the pretty, delicate young forewoman. "I 'm going back to service as soon as the lady I like to live with comes home from the South. I shall die of this benzine; it nearly ruins me. I have lost ten pounds in three weeks, and I am getting so I can neither eat nor sleep."

"There 's no need for *you* to do it," said one of the girls.

"The six dollars tempted me; I want to do well for my little boy."

"Yes; and get your death and leave him an orphan; that will be doing well for him!"

"And you have money, Stella, a thousand dollars," said one; "your husband's life insurance, and the money from his share of the ship he was drowned from."

"Yes; but I want to save that to set my boy up in business."

"Instead, you 'll kill yourself at this work, and some one will abuse the boy and use up all his thousand. Children are ill off without mothers. You do n't show good sense."

The girls worked as they talked, worked mechanically and swiftly. Some of them had elected to be paid by the piece. These were the experienced workers. They all laughed openly at Deborah for her slowness. She felt dizzy from the smell of the benzine; her back ached from standing; her head ached with the noise and heavy air; her hands and arms ached from dragging the stiff brush with the terribly tenacious paste.

And oh what a hubbub! One girl sang snatches of street songs; two chattered about a low theatre, about which they seemed nearly demented; several indulged in jokes, the coarseness of which was constantly repressed by the forewoman if they became too atrocious; very vulgar words constantly were resounding in the room, but profanity was repressed by the forewoman and one or two others.

"I know where you found that kind of talk," burst out Stella, the young widow, their forewoman, one day, "from those wicked books and flash papers that you read. Many of you spend dimes and nickels, which laid up would buy you shoes, for filthy trash that fills your mind with reckless thoughts and stifles whatever conscience is left in you! I have seen you hanging about counters where the stuff is sold, and buying things that are kept hidden under counters and dare not be brought to light!"

Some of the girls had the grace to blush. "We must read," said one sulkily.

"Sometimes I think it is a pity you ever learned, you make such a bad use of your knowledge," retorted Stella.

"Bad stuff is cheap, you know," suggested another.

"So is good reading cheap," cried Deborah; "there is just as cheap good reading as bad, and the good reading would make you better and more womanly, while this other degrades you. Can one touch pitch and not be defiled?"

CHAPTER VI.

CRUMBS.

> " Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
> Of the golden age. Why not? I have neither hope nor trust:
> May make my heart as a mill-stone, set my face like flint,
> Cheat and be cheated and die. Who knows? We are ashes
> and dust."

THE tales which Dick Kegan had told at the rubber-factory in regard to Miss Grosvenor's former great wealth and the sudden loss of fortune which reduced her to the ranks of working-girls made her conspicuous in the pasting-room. Her new companions discussed her and her affairs openly, with refreshing frankness.

" I 'm glad you lost your money," said one. " Serves you right. All the rich folks ought to lose their money. It is all stolen from the poor. What right has one person to be rolling in gold while another rolls in mud? You had more than you deserved of being fed on the fat of the land and dressed in silks and satins! It just makes me mad to see these rich folks going about with their noses sniffed up, despising us poor ones. You did that, I know."

" I am sure I did not," said Deborah.

"Well, were you sorry for them and kind and trying to help?"

"No," said Deborah honestly, "I never knew what need there was, and I just never thought about poor people at all."

"Hm—spent all your time thinking about your own precious self! Well, now you 'll have a chance to think about yourself in another way—that your legs are numb, and your back is like to break in two, and your fingers hurt so you can't sleep. Perhaps that will teach you to regard poor folks more than if they were sticks and stones of the street."

"Being poor do n't make people kind-hearted," spoke up another girl. "There 's Mrs. Frankley. She was as bad off as we are when she was a young girl. Did slop-sewing, and was as poor as Job's turkey. Then, as she was pretty, Mr. Frankley married her, and he got rich and they just roll in wealth. She plays now at being charitable; but she is so scornful and domineering that I 'd rather die than be helped by her. One real delicate girl, who was out of work, she got a place in a cigar factory for, and the doctors said she 'd die if she stayed there; but Mrs. Frankley said if the girl was so proud and self-willed that she would n't take what was given her, she would do nothing more for her. A poor girl has n't any right to live, in her ideas!"

"You think it is very bad in this country," said a middle-aged English woman, "but here the poor have some chance to get rich. In my country people are rich and great because they are born so; and when one is born low down he has to stay down. Now here folks can at least hope. There 's one text in the Bible that ought to be preached from every Sunday. If it was, I 'd go to church. 'What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts.' But the parsons never touch on that. If religion was more than a pretending, if folks really believed that there was one Father in heaven, and all people were His children and ought to help each other, things would get straightened up. But no; they are religious for themselves, just as they are rich for themselves. I declare it makes me mad! I suppose," and she turned fiercely to Deborah, "that you called yourself religious, and never thought of the poor!"

"I was very wrong; that was because I had too little religion."

"Stuff! If you had your money back to-day, you 'd be as bad to-morrow."

"Was it because of the rich and poor and the hard times that you came to this country?" demanded another girl, "'out of the frying-pan into the fire!' What do you think I saw yesterday?

Three children down of scarlet fever in one room; no lights; father bent double with rheumatism, and has to sleep on the floor, so the sick children can lie on the bed. No money, fuel nearly gone, and the poor mother crying, 'Oh if I only had a light! Oh if I had some candles! I'm afraid my children will die in the dark, and I can't have a last look at them!' Is it such trouble you came to this country to share, Mrs. Hodge?"

"It may be bad here, but it's worse there," said Mrs. Hodge doggedly. "Here there's hope for the children, a chance for the boys. I have a grand-nephew, Oliver, that has the makings of a good man in him, if he don't get led off. He may get on in the world and help the rest of us—only he's pulled down by a bad step-father, poor lad!"

"Drink, I suppose," said Stella. "Drink is at the bottom of the trouble and poverty in this country, most of it at least. If folks are very low down, you can find drink at the beginning of the misery. The worst of it is that those who get the hard part of the suffering are not the ones who did the sinning."

"And how do you think you'll like being poor?" said "big Jean," a handsome Scotch girl with short red curls. She had a mocking smile on her face as she turned to Deborah.

"I sha'n't like it," said Deborah fiercely; "but if there are such things as these I 'd rather hear it and feel it, and have my blood boil with anger and sorrow over it, than go on knowing nothing about it, doing nothing about it, when the Lord expects me to do something."

"Oh, the Lord. Then you do pretend to be religious! Well, see if you can keep it up among us. The owner of this factory is supposed to be religious also. Wait till pay-night and see if you think much of practical piety then. If you do n't get treated right you can go to church and pray for your enemies. I suppose you do go to church?"

"Yes, indeed; do n't you?"

"Not much. When would I get my washing and my mending done, or take a breath of fresh air in the Park?"

"I lie in bed all day Sunday the year round," said another worker. "I do n't want to go to the Park and see other folks all dressed up to kill, and me left in tatters."

"Well, I go to church in the morning and evening, and in the afternoon I teach in a Sunday-school," said Deborah.

"You 'll find you can't do that, once you have worked long enough to get real tired out," cried several.

"What do you teach in Sunday-school? 'Do as you'd be done by'? And for example tell how good and liberal you used to be when you had plenty?"

"You wind up," said the big Scotch girl. "Dick Kegan says she is awful kind, and gives away things and pays rent for poor folks that is turned out, and nursed a sick woman in their court. She a'n't half bad; if she had been she'd have kept her money. The mean ones have all the luck in this world. I remember when I was in Scotland, a wee girlie, my old mother kept Sunday like that; and evenings, when the win' soughed about the house, we sat by the chimney lug and she told me tales out of the Bible, and about John Knox and Mary Queen of Scots and Bloody Mary and the rest."

"A Scotch woman, Nurse Jamieson, lives with me," said Deborah, looking at her. "Perhaps you'd like to know her."

"I don't care to know any decent folks," said Jean. "Do you know that I drink? and when I get drunk I'm a terror! I've been to the Island. The very night I got back I went to the bank and drew fifty dollars, and got a lot of girls together, and we had a big supper and a spree."

"What!" cried Deborah, "a woman act so?"

"You're what they call out West a tenderfoot!" sneered a girl.

"She knows what they say in the Wild West," shouted her neighbor, "because she sits up nights reading nickel novels and blood and fire stories, about women scouts and cattle king women, that shoot folks right and left, and have n't the fear of God or man before their eyes."

"Half the mischief among you girls is done by bad books," spoke up Mrs. Hodge. "You 're like what you feed your minds on. Bad books and whiskey, there 's your ruin."

"I should think it hardly paid to spend fifty dollars that way," said Deborah, turning to Jean.

"So I thought. So I bolted for the sea-shore, and told my story to one of the Temperance women, and got her to take me for a cook. She was mighty kind to me—had me in to prayers every morning. I could n't get one drop of drink. Five weeks I stood it; then I told her it was no use; I 'd go back to the city if I had to walk. So I went, and spent my fifteen dollars of wages on a big drink the night I got back. Now I 've been good two months, and I mean to break out again."

"You 'd better get some one to lock you up," said Deborah, horrified.

"Wont do any good. I 've tried everything."

Deborah shook her head. "Surely you did

not try in the right way, looking to our blessed Lord to help you and keep you from falling. In his strength we stand, Jean."

"I did the best I knew. I thought of my dead mither, an' I went down to the Bethel, and the singing made me cry. The preacher prayed so I got down on my knees and cried out loud, and if that is no getting religion what is?"

"Were you sorry for your sins, and did you feel how they had wounded Christ, and did you lay them on him and ask that he should wash you in his blood and keep you clean?"

"No, I didna. I hae clean forgot a' my mither tellt me aboot Christ the Lord."

"She was in a factory that got afire, and no escapes had been provided, and some lives were lost; and she was badly burned on the side and legs, and was in a hospital for a year and got twelve hundred dollars damages; and she 's squandered it on drinking till it is nearly gone," explained Deborah's neighbor.

"I wish I could get a chance of getting burned and getting all that money damages," said a girl. "I 'd go get a little place in a village, and get married, and live in peace, and bring up my family decently. Life would be worth something then."

"Could so much be done with twelve hundred dollars?" thought Miss Grosvenor. There was a noise, an exclamation; one of the girls had fainted. "Take her into the hall by a window," said the forewoman. "This room ought to be ventilated. It is killing us all."

"Why not speak to the employers, and have it ventilated and made decent?" said Deborah.

"Oh, you innocent!" sneered a paster, "do n't you know that for two or three or four dollars a week we are bought body and soul? Suppose we are killed? What then? Working girls are plenty; room for the next!"

For two weeks Deborah remained in the pasting-room. Uncle Josiah and Nurse Jamieson watched her closely and begged her to leave it and wait for something better. "I will leave it when I find something better," said Deborah. "How would other girls do? Keep on if it killed them, I suppose."

"But you are not quite in that case," said her uncle.

Privately Uncle Josiah instructed Dick Kegan to inform himself as to what went on in the pasting-room, and if anything particularly unpleasant happened to Miss Grosvenor, to let him know at once. "Ay, I understand," said Dick. Meanwhile Deborah, having entered the pasting-room on Thursday morning, went with the rest on Saturday night for her wages—a dollar and a half for half a week's work.

"D. Grosvenor," said the paying-clerk. "Well, let 's see. You broke the handle of a paste-brush; thirty-five cents for that."

"It was an old brush, and never cost over twenty-five cents when it was new," said Deborah with indignation.

"That is none of your business," said the clerk. "If you pay high you 'll learn to be careful. Late two mornings and one noon, five minutes once, ten minutes twice; fined for lateness thirty cents."

"It was not late by the city clock; your clock is kept fast. And my time is not paid for at ten cents an hour; that would be a dollar a day instead of fifty cents," replied Deborah.

"If you do n't like it you can lump it," said the clerk. "Take it or leave it; pasters are plenty." He gave her eighty-five cents, saying, "Move on; too much talk from you."

How angry was Dives' daughter at this treatment! Her fellow-workwomen instructed her. "You can't make them play fair; it 's no use to talk. That 's the way they grind us down!"

After three girls had fainted in the pasting-room, Deborah announced her intention of going to remonstrate with the owner. The other pasters awaited with joy, interest, and covert scorn the result of the remonstrance of Dives' daughter in behalf of sanitary provisions.

Deborah's boots and gloves, dress and hat, were black and neat, her bearing that of the child of "the classes." She appeared at the front door of the office, and the owner rose up with a bow. "Did you wish to see me?"

"Yes," said Deborah, "I came to tell you, what perhaps you do not know, that your pasting room is in such a terrible condition, from want of fresh air, from dirt and the smell of benzine, that the health of the girls is being ruined. They faint frequently. Mere humanity demands sanitary improvements in the room."

"I am sorry you came on this errand, madam. We employers are much harassed by our employées, and when the ladies of the city take upon themselves inspection and interference with matters where they are unacquainted, it is very trying to us. If my girls do not like the place, let them leave it; there are others."

"But they must live. They leave you, and work is scarce; they stand on the streets. Why not on your part treat them humanely?"

"I really regret that a lady should meddle on hearsay."

"I am not meddling on hearsay. I know what I am speaking about. I work in that room. I am one of the pasters."

The man looked confounded, then recovered himself

"If that is so, let me say that I do not allow my hands to dictate to me. Good-day. You will be fined for lateness."

The girls up stairs greeted the self-appointed ambassadress with ironical laughter. "How do you like owners?" "That 's the way rich ones treat poor ones." "Did he ask the honor of dancing with you, or give you a bouquet, as you 're accustomed to have gentlemen do?" "Well, it was plucky of you, all the same." "But it wont work." "Why did n't you try a little Scripture on him?"

Deborah had been two weeks in the pasting-room when one noon Dick Kegan waited on the corner for Uncle Josiah. "It wont do; you 'll have to take her out. This morning she fainted in that den."

Uncle Josiah turned pale and hurried home. "Deborah, you are not going back to that place. You fainted to-day."

"Who told you?"

"Dick Kegan. That ends it."

"Other girls faint and go back; they have to."

"You do n't have to—yet. You 'll wait for more reasonable occupation. I was just wondering how I should use an extra five dollars that I 've come into. We 'll take a street-car and ride all around the city, outside of the city, and end up with taking an oyster tea. Nurse Jamieson, you need not look for us back to tea."

"But, uncle! other girls—working girls—can't have such treats."

"That is no reason you should not. Besides, brought up as you were, you need it. Come on, Deborah, do as I say. Next week will be Christmas. We 'll go where our attic things are stored and get out some more, and we 'll buy candy and fruit and clothing and so on, with ten dollars that have been given to me for the purpose, and we 'll get ready for a Christmas tree at my Mission—the first one for that slum."

Deborah came back from that outing looking quite herself, but she recalled a year past and thought how scornfully she would have rejected a street-car, oysters in a plain restaurant, and buying flannel, jackets, shirts, coarse woollen socks, and little hoods and coats for the wild brood that came irregularly to Uncle Josiah's "Daystar Mission."

"The search for work is to begin again," sighed Deborah.

"You 'll rest a week first," said her uncle.

"I 've earned four dollars and ninety-five cents in two weeks," said Deborah, "and if I rest a week I shall be just a dollar and five cents behind with the rent money."

"Never mind. We will find some way of making it up," said Uncle Josiah carelessly.

In a day or two a note came to Deborah from the Consolidated Charities, where she had left her application for work a month before. An assistant was needed at the Day Nursery on Blondel Street, in their ward. Wages two dollars and a half, breakfast and dinner. No work on Sunday, as then the children were at home, except three or four, for whom the matron cared.

Nurse Jamieson and Deborah went to look at it. Deborah knew no more about the care of children than she did about the raising of bees. But she must do something. The little brick house was clean, the floors were well scrubbed, the bare little dining-room was neat; the schoolroom, where a young girl held a kindergarten, was quite bright and pretty. Up stairs were the matron's neat room and two nursery rooms, one full of little cots, the other provided with rugs, toys, and chairs. In the third story was the housemaid's room, the bath-room, the clothes-room. The matron, housemaid, and assistant nurse were expected to do all the work for the house and twenty-five children from five years old down to two weeks old. The kindergarten teacher taught the older ten three hours each morning, five days in a week, for six dollars a week and her dinner.

"Do you know anything about children?" asked the matron.

"No, nothing," said Deborah.

"You look sensible and capable," said the matron, "but not very companionable."

Deborah smiled. "I might learn to be companionable."

"She looks what she is, a warld too guid for the work!" cried Nurse Jamieson angrily.

"Hush, Agnes dear," said Deborah. "No one is too good for the work of taking care of little children."

"That is right," said the matron, "'for whoso receiveth one such little child,' our Lord says, 'receiveth me.' Well, you can come and try it. Our last nurse was a nice girl; and one of the managers took her for her own nursery, at three and a half a week."

"What are your duties, Deborah, in your new place?" asked her uncle after a few days.

Deborah laughed. "I get there at half-past six, and then the mothers begin to hand the children in. Most of them have to be scrubbed and combed; all of them have their dresses, aprons, shoes and stockings changed for nursery clothing. The little bits of ones we lay in cradles or cribs and give them their bottles. Then at eight o'clock the matron and I go to breakfast with the rest. We have coffee, porridge, potatoes, milk-gravy, and bread and butter. The children drink milk and we get coffee. All day long we rock babies, wrestle with the colic, adjust quarrels, bathe bumps, dose the sick ones, dress burns or cuts that they get at home, put liniment on sore throats. Almost all of the children have something the matter with them. Bad fare, bad air, hard work, worry, do n't produce, it seems, very healthy or merry children. But we have some real pretty, sweet-tempered ones. The air is kept good and the house is comfortably heated. I have found out that I can sing crying babies to sleep, that I know how to explain pictures and to tell stories. I can even build up a tower of blocks! You told me to earn twenty dollars a month. I earn ten and two meals daily. After I pay our rent I shall have two dollars a month for clothing. Will that keep me in shoes, I wonder?"

CHAPTER VII.

" SON, REMEMBER."

" According to metaphysical creed,
To the earliest books that children read
For much good or bad they are debtors.
But before with their A, B, C's they start
There are things in morals, as well as heart,
That play a very important part—
Impressions—before the letters."

" WHAT ! you here ? " It was Sunday morning, and Deborah answered the front-door bell of the " Day Nursery." The matron was not well, and Deborah had come to take her place for part of the day, as ten children whose mothers worked in hotels and restaurants were left at the Nursery over Sabbath. When Deborah opened the door she found on the steps, waiting, the English woman, Mrs. Hodge, who had worked in the pasting-room. Deborah was now becoming accustomed to uncourtly greetings which would have shocked Miss Grosvenor. To her surprise, she felt her heart warming towards this big uncouth creature whose hard life she understood from experiences of its pains, and whose sufferings she had shared.

" I am here, Mrs. Hodge; come in. What can be done for you ?"

"My niece that I live with was taken to the hospital last night, and has left two little children—one six months, one two and a half years old—on my hands. I 'm the only one now to do for them, for her man ran away just before the baby was born. There 's a boy that gets two and a quarter a week, and if I can get the children nursed, so I can keep on at the factory, we 'll do."

"The Nursery is pretty full," said Deborah, "but I 'll go to the matron and see that she takes your babies; it is a desperate case surely. And how are you getting on at the factory?"

"It 's a bit better now. Just after you left a long piece came out in two of the city papers, all about our place. It told about the bad air and the girls fainting, how two had died and nobody cared, and it had a big heading, 'LEGAL MURDER,' 'MODERN BUTCHERY,' 'KILL THE GIRLS, THEY 'RE PLENTY,' and so on. Oh! I tell you it was real fine reading! And folks began to talk, and a committee came to see, and one girl by good luck fainted right before their eyes. So such a fuss was made that the place was cleaned up and ventilated, and we do a bit better. Did you put that in the paper, miss?"

"No, indeed, I know nothing about it," and then Deborah remembered that she had seen Uncle Josiah writing sheets of foolscap late one evening, just after she left the pasting-room. Perhaps Uncle Josiah had taken it in hand. But she did not ask.

"May I bring the children in to show you?" asked Mrs. Hodge. "I left them on the curbstone at the corner."

"By all means get them; they'll freeze there this cold day. I will go up and speak about them to the matron while you are gone."

"We'll make room for them," said Deborah, as she admitted Mrs. Hodge and a pair of half-tidy, healthy-looking babies, with rosy English cheeks, blooming like hardy exotics among the paler American children.

"Boys," said Mrs. Hodge, "both of 'em, and I'm glad of that; women and girls have it hard, too hard, in this life. Their names are Edward and Reuben."

"I think the men have it about as bad; they seem to have more temptations, or yield more to them, to commit crimes. Think of the great penitentiaries full!" cried Deborah.

"Yes, but did you ever go to the Women's Penitentiary? Sixteen hundred women, from sixteen to seventy years old, in for long terms and short terms. That's a sight! There are children born in prison who see no other place till they are five or six years old, poor things. That's a lot for the sons and daughters of women to be born to, miss! Who'd want to be a mother at that rate? I sat down and cried hearty when these babies come to town. What are they like to come to?" A great compassion for these two babes of "the masses" overwhelmed Deborah's soul. She had been behind the scenes; she knew the privation, the misery, the temptation that would meet them on every hand. "Mrs. Hodge," she said, "the very greatest misery is being wicked. The bad man makes himself wretched and increases the wretchedness of others. Look at the father of these children. If he had been honest, good, industrious, and had stood by his wife like a man, she and these little ones would have been safe and comfortable."

"Ay. You speak like a book, miss."

"Then your first effort must be to bring up these little fellows to be good, to be sober, diligent, honest. They will be in the midst of all kinds of temptation, and unless you get help from God and try to bring them up in his fear, they will fall away. Don't let them go to destruction, Mrs. Hodge. Go to the church with them; pray for them; teach them about God. Read the Bible to them. You'll help them and yourself that way."

"I'm not much of a hand at religion; I've got hardened seeing so much misery. But I wish, miss, you could try your hand on these boys' older half-brother. He 's fifteen, and a pretty good boy, but now just at the age where boys are led off, and unless some one takes hold of him pretty sharp, he will go to the dogs like the rest. Oliver his name is, Oliver Hunt."

"Do you suppose he would go to the Mission with me this afternoon, if I should call for him?"

There 's no telling. But if you 'll let me know the time you 'll come for him, I 'll try and keep him at home. I 'll make him a potato-cake; that will hold him till you get there. I 'll send him after a dozen of potatoes as soon as I get back."

"Why it 's Sunday!" exclaimed Deborah.

"Eh! Do n't you buy things Sunday? Well there 's plenty of shops open all day in our quarter, more shops than dimes to buy with. I do wish you could get hold of my boy, miss. There is something strong-like in you, and maybe you could make a man of him. Just think of the difference it will make, a hearty fellow like that, with perhaps sixty or seventy years before him, whether he 's bad or good!"

Deborah's face glowed at this suggestion. What is that multitude of sins, hidden or prevented, by "whoso converts a sinner from the error of his ways!" And youth is the age of hope.

"I have heard you speak of this boy, Oliver I think you called him. I will do all I can for him, Mrs. Hodge."

"Ay; keep him away from bad men and from drink. Take him to the Mission; see what religion will do for him. Only, for my part, I don't take much stock in religion that allows such goings-on as I see reg'lar."

"Religion does not allow it. True religion would prevent these miseries and evils, for the laws and spirit of the gospel are all in behalf of helpfulness and benevolence. The trouble is that there is too little of true religion, not enough of the tender, helpful Christ spirit; our religion is not deeply rooted in our lives, not rich enough in fruit-bearing. Oh I once was rich and could have helped you! Now I can do so little!"

"It helps me just to talk with you," said Mrs. Hodge gratefully.

"If I had back my wealth would I be an idler as before?" Deborah asked herself as she dismissed Mrs. Hodge, telling her to bring the children around to the Nursery early in the morning.

That afternoon at two o'clock Deborah climbed the dirty stairs leading to Mrs. Hodge's rooms. Evidently the place had been newly swept and garnished in expectation of her visit.

The best room, the one that had the rag carpet on it, was in possession of the children; the boy Oliver was walking up and down trying to put the baby to sleep. In the kitchen, yet wet from a mopping, Mrs. Hodge was washing the frying-pan wherein she had cooked her potato-cakes.

"Here 's Oliver," said Mrs. Hodge. "Oliver, it 's you the lady came for."

Oliver looked angry: in his experience ladies ran about after very naughty boys and gave them reproofs and peppermints and took them to schools where they were "faulted." Oliver felt himself a man; he was earning his bread, and since his step-father decamped no one tried to rule him.

Deborah saw that she must gain favor. She cast a radiant smile on Oliver, such as she had not often vouchsafed to golden youth in her days of splendor.

"How well you handle that child!" she cried. "Do you know, once I read that being able to handle a baby well was a true mark of a gentleman."

"You can't even me with a gentleman," said the boy, flushing.

"Why not?"

"Oh—well—I 'm poor and live among poor folks, and—"

"Listen to this—

> ‘The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer—
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil, spirit:
> The first true gentleman that ever breathed.’

Do you know whom I mean, Oliver?"

"No, miss."

"The Lord Jesus Christ—who was both God and man; he was poor and lived among the poor. He was tender with little children. I like to think of Him taking children in his arms and blessing them: calling a little child and ‘setting him in the midst.’"

"Yes, miss; I 've seen the picture of that in the shop windows!"

"So you like pictures? And do you like singing?"

"Ay, when I can hear the words out fairly like."

"This afternoon I am going to sing at the Daystar Mission. I think you would like it there. I came to invite you to go with me."

"Yes, Oliver lad, give me the baby an' go with miss."

"I 'm not fine enough," said Oliver, surveying himself.

"Indeed, you are," said Deborah. "We have very few at the Daystar as well dressed as you are. If you 'll come, perhaps some, seeing you go in, may think it respectable enough for them to come too. I 'm sure you 'll like it, and be a help. Can you sing?"

"You should just hear him troll out the Waits I taught him," said Mrs. Hodge proudly. "When he was a bit lad of five, in England, I took him round with the Waits one Christmas, and the quality gave him five shillings."

"Quality! No more quality than we are," cried Oliver crossly.

"We can all of us be of a good quality, I hope," said Deborah.

"Go with miss," urged Dame Hodge; "you are fine and clean. He is mighty particular about being clean, miss."

"Clean outside and clean inside is it?" said Deborah, with a keen bright look that quite captivated Oliver.

"If I might do my hair a bit and black my shoes," he replied, laying the child gently on the patch-work quilt of the bed.

"Certainly, I 'll wait," said Deborah. "Mrs. Hodge, who else are in this house? Any one that I know?"

"Well, big Jean, from the pasting-room; do you mind her? the big girl with the close-cropped red curls."

"Oh, is Jean here! I want to see her. I have thought of her so often, and last night I dreamed of her, and I woke feeling that I had neglected an opportunity in not looking her up. But, do you know, I 'm pretty much of a coward, and I heard so much about her getting drunk and being furious."

"Ay. She 's had one outbreak since you left the room, and two weeks back she came here, just to get out of temptation of some drinking girls, I do believe. Her room is opposite."

"I 'll go and speak to her while Oliver gets ready."

Mrs. Hodge approved. She wanted a clear coast that she might give Oliver his mother's best handkerchief and necktie to make him fine.

Deborah knocked at the opposite door.

"Come in then!" said big Jean. "You 've hunted me out, have you?"

Deborah opened the door. The room was most desolate. Across the foot of the bed lay Jean, partly on her face, her strong white arms flung up over her head. She spoke without seeing who entered. "I came here to get rid of ye; but Sunday 's my worst day, and Satan knew it and he sent you along. That 's the way it goes."

"God sent me," said Deborah, speaking out clearly. "Jean, if a soul is striving against evil, it is because the Spirit of God strives in it.

Is Sunday your worst day? Come then with me where you will get help."

Jean suddenly sat up and looked at her. "You, miss!" She was about to cry, "You, Deborah," as to her other acquaintances, but Deborah in her severely plain but good Sunday gear subdued her.

"I came for Oliver, Mrs. Hodge's nephew, to go to Mission School. Mrs. Hodge said you were here, and I came for you too. Come."

Jean gave a hard laugh. "Me at Mission! At a bar, more likely."

"Come," said Deborah insistently. "I 'm going to sing 'My Ain Countree' and 'The Land o' the Leal." Jean hung her head. "And 'The Lord my Shepherd is,' added Deborah.

"My mither used to cradle me wi' that," said Jean, looking up.

"Perhaps the Good Shepherd is using it now to call his wandering sheep home."

"Go away and leave me," said Jean. "I 'm no good. I can't be helped. The craze for drink is strong in me. I just cast myself here and cried out, 'God, let me die!'"

"And perhaps he has answered, 'Live, my child.' Come, Jean."

"I 'm not fit to be seen in the street wi' you."

The soul of Deborah was seized with a strong passion of saving another soul. She went to Jean and laid her small gloved hand upon her shoulder. "Come, I cannot let you perish for whom Christ died. Come, Jean, I beg. Come to the Mission. Come home to tea with me. Nurse Jamieson is Scotch. She will bring back to you mother and home."

So Deborah went to the Daystar Mission with those two, Oliver Hunt and Jean. What would she have thought a year before if she could have foreseen herself so accompanied?

"Jean," she said, "I want you to make up your mind that I am going to look after you."

"You 'll have a hard time of it," said Jean. "Sunday is my worst day, having nothing to do; but I 'm only a plague at the best of times. I keep a body always uncertain—when I 'm sober wondering when I will get drunk; and when I 'm drunk wondering when I 'll get sober. Why were people made so! I feel as if God himself could n't help me!"

"But he can; nothing is impossible with God."

"I say," said Oliver carelessly, "looks kind of sneaking to let a habit get the better of you and make you a slave."

"So it does," said Deborah, "but where do habits begin? Any one who does what is evidently wrong—swears, listens to vile talk, breaks the Sabbath, lies, cheats, whether once or often-er—may be laying the foundation of a habit; and it seems to be, as you say, rather sneaking to do what we know to be wrong and that we need not do."

Oliver's ears grew very red: the conversation had taken an unexpected turn and was nearing home!

Later Deborah found time to say to him privately, "Oliver, watch over Jean; go and talk to her in the evenings; ask Mrs. Hodge to invite her into your rooms. If you see her on the street, walk home with her. You may be helping God to save a soul."

"What I? I help God, miss? Oh surely!" stammered the boy. Life for him had taken on a new dignity.

During January and February Dives' daughter was assistant in the Day Nursery. In the latter part of February measles of an aggravated type broke out in the neighborhood of Romaine Court. All the children at the Nursery were seized; mothers lost their places by being kept from their work to care for the sick babies, and a deeper poverty complicated their disasters. Soon the unsanitary condition of the homes told in an outbreak of scarlet fever and diphtheria: foul sinks and closets, clogged drains, dirty walls, floors rotting from long neglect or washing with filthy water, windows that would not open, clothing worn until it fell to tatters—these lay as the background of the pestilence. The Board of Health distributed leaflets that were for the most part unread, sent people about to whitewash and fumigate, and the Dispensaries were besieged; but what were these efforts against a scourge that had been bred in the midst of long neglect, and was now practically fostered by ignorance?

Deborah's work at the Nursery was for the present done. Only three or four motherless little ones were kept there under care of the matron. But there was work enough for Deborah, work into which duty and compassion drew her, for it seemed as if there was scarcely a house where there was not one dead. How pitiful were those homes, where on a board, or on two chairs, or on the sole bed, some little rigid form lay under a rag of white cloth, while around its stillness the daily toil of cooking, washing, scrubbing must go on, else where would be bread for the other mouths?

Deborah unconsciously was taking lessons in nursing in these doleful days, and was overcoming some of her painful squeamishness about the sights and surroundings in these poverty-stricken homes.

"Who is she?" said the Dispensary doctor to Mrs. Werner, after he had found Deborah several times helping the Swede with the baby and little Berta, who were both ill; and now for the first time Berta had leisure to play with the big doll which had once been Deborah's toy, and which the small feverish hands now clasped and stroked with great delight.

Mrs. Werner replied, "She rich young lady, play poor. She work; but have three rooms, and no cook, no wash; how she be very poor, eh? Oh she lofley, an' do so much good, what tings she know; but she not know ferry much. Rich folks is like that, eh?"

Going her rounds among families whom she knew because the children had been at the Nursery, Deborah found Mrs. Hodge overwhelmed with the care of two sick little ones. Their mother was still in the hospital. If Mrs. Hodge gave up her work in the pasting-room where would be bread?

How were the babies cared for? Oliver, Mrs. Hodge, Jean, took half-days off and nursed the little sufferers, and a woman in the house whose husband took care of his family, so that the mother could give her time to her little ones, would bring two sick babies, and with one in her arms and one laid on chairs, would attend to the two in the bed! Hard times for babies, these, good people! At night Jean seemed tireless in sitting up. "I like it," she said to

Deborah. "I get tired out and I sleep sound, and I feel as if I am some good, and I don't think of drinking."

One evening late Uncle Josiah went to see Mrs. Hodge with Deborah; the younger baby was at the point of death. Oliver sat with the child on his knees. Tears were in his eyes.

"You love the little fellow, don't you, Oliver?" said Deborah.

"I like all little children, and cats and dogs and pigeons, and when I think of my mother I love these little chaps; but when I think of their dad, I can't bear 'em, for I hate him. If he comes back I 'll pitch him down stairs. He is a low fellow. He has kicked and hit me his last, you bet!" The boy's face showed an ominous passion of wrath.

"Oliver," said Deborah, "the Bible tells us not to avenge ourselves, but rather to give place unto wrath."

"I do," said Oliver, "I give it place till I 'm chock full up to the brim and running over with it!"

Deborah could not forbear a smile. "Oliver, if you saw a mad dog coming down the street at you, how would you give it place?"

"I 'd jump out of the way quicker an' let it go by!"

"That is the way to give place unto wrath.

Let it go by. Give it place to pass, not to lodge. That is what God wants of you."

A low sound from the sick baby's cot attracted their attention. "Bless him," said Mrs. Hodge, "he 's going."

Jean was on her knees by the little one, looking earnestly into the glazing eyes and blanching face. "Oh why did n't I go so when I was little! Why did I live! Oh how happy the baby is to go before the time of sin! Wont it be strange to wake out of this room into heaven!"

Deborah stood awed. She found death very pitiful here.

They went away home leaving the little one with folded hands, laid in a clean white gown, on the only table, and all the weary family lying asleep around it.

"Deborah," said Uncle Josiah, to divert her mind, "you have some teaching ability; you explained that point well to Oliver."

"Yes," said Deborah humbly, "I might teach if I really knew anything. All I know is a product of association. I cannot conjugate a French or an English verb correctly. I doubt if I could do an example in compound multiplication. It is a great misfortune to be brought up as I was."

"You are learning great lessons now, my child."

Deborah thought lessons multiplied when Nurse Agnes fell ill of bronchitis, and Deborah had to nurse her and keep the house. She tried to make bread and failed ignominiously. She was obliged to resort to Mrs. Werner to ask her to do the simplest things. At first Agnes refused to allow her young lady to wait upon her. But after a long and somewhat heated private discussion with Uncle Josiah, she yielded, and Deborah made plasters and poultices and spoiled food for ten days. Then suddenly Jean appeared.

"I 've come to do the work here," she said. "You do n't know how, miss, and it 's too much to ask of you."

"But, Jean, we can't afford to pay you, and you 'll lose your place!"

"At the rubber? Not I. I 'm too valuable. I 'm the strongest girl in the building. Did you hear how I stopped a row twice, all alone? I can go back when I please. As for pay, your uncle paid me in advance, and I 'd have come anyhow; it may keep me from breaking out. I 've been sober eight weeks!"

"Just to think," said Deborah to her uncle, "that I do n't even know how to do our little cooking and ironing! And I find that the ignorance of very rich girls is matched by the ignorance of the very poor girls. The poor have frequently no opportunity for learning, and in their homes much of the sickness and poverty arises from the lack of housekeeping knowledge. They waste both food and money. There should be a cooking-school in every ward for girls and boys too. When the mothers and wives are ill the sons and husbands should be able to do the housework and keep things comfortable. The girls should learn how to buy and cook plain wholesome food."

"I have thought," said Uncle Josiah, "that every public school building should have a room for a cooking-school, where the girls and lads of the ward could come in classes, each getting two lessons a week. A range should be provided and the janitor should see to the fires. Pupils could bring provisions to cook for their own families, necessary utensils could be provided, and after the meal was prepared and the table laid the pupils could share the product of their own cooking."

The epidemic passed away; one of its results was great poverty, owing to the loss of work by the poor mothers. Another was that the persons who at the order of the Board of Health came about and applied disinfectants were often so careless that quilts and blankets and clothing and bed-ticks were entirely destroyed, very great suffering resulting from this.

Finally nurse was well, and Deborah looked for work once more. She found a place in a paper-box factory this time, and with no Dick Kegan to tell romances about her, she entered among her working sisters in the same factory on the same footing as the rest. They called her at once "Proudy," because she spoke grammatically, had clean skin and tidy garments, wore gloves, and carried a sun umbrella!

The room where they worked was a top story with windows only in the roof. The covering of fancy paper-boxes and putting edges of lace paper in them was not difficult work, and Deborah soon became tolerably expert. The first week she worked for nothing, to "learn." The next week she was fined all her three dollars' wages, for "imperfect work." The third week her fines were fifty cents. Thus in three weeks she succeeded in earning two dollars and a half.

The air of the work-room was warm, but not close, as the windows could be raised. The girls, seated at long tables, pursued their work quickly and mechanically. They were not quite as wild a set as those in the pasting-room at the rubber-factory, but terrified Deborah with the boldness and freedom of their conversation and their decided preference for discussing scandals.

"Why do n't you girls talk about something nice?" said Deborah one day desperately, raising her head from her work. "Why will you think and talk about what will make you coarse and vulgar and perhaps utterly bad? We are here at hard work; we have very little that is pleasant in our lives, but it is open to us to keep ourselves decent and respectable. Why should we working-girls let ourselves run down in manners and morals? Why should we help the world to keep us low and despised? Why should we consent to be the worst, and not the best, that we can?"

"We don't aim to be ladies, Proudy," retorted one.

"If to be a lady is to be something nice and desirable, why should we not care enough for ourselves to aim at being that?"

"Oh we can't get the last touch in manners, the way you have!"

"People are at the level of what they think about, girls. If we think of the low, the foolish, the vicious, if we fill our minds with hate and envy and meanness, then we shall be mean and low. Let us think and talk of nice things, and so we shall grow nice."

"What nice things have we to think about? Worn-out stockings, unpaid rent, drunken dads, cold winters, hot summers? Give us something better if you can," cried the girls.

"She's right," spoke up Martha, who had hitherto been silent. "I have always hated the talk in this room, but I did not dare to say so."

"What a blessing it would be if young ladies who have leisure would only come here and read to us," said Deborah.

"The foreman would not allow it," said Martha.

"The young ladies don't care enough for us to try it, any way," said another girl.

"I don't want 'em round here, turning up noses at us," said Dora.

"Now, girls, work as fast as you can" said Deborah; "let us all make our fingers fly; and I will tell you something that will make the hardest lot of the poorest girl here seem very easy by comparison. You will from what I tell you learn how much you have to thank God for, how many blessings we all have about us. Sometimes hearing of real hard things makes our lot seem easier, whatever it is. My story is true; and if there is anything in it that you don't understand I'll do my best to explain." She began the story of Silvio Pellico and his wonderful prisons. Oh wonderful story of undying charm!

CHAPTER VIII.

"THOU RECEIVEDST GOOD THINGS."

" I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell;
I said, 'O soul, make merry, and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

DEBORAH had never spent a summer in the city except that last one, when on the Fourth of July, just as she was prepared to start for Saratoga and the White Mountains, the accident had occurred which resulted in the death of her parents and her own loss of fortune. In the cool, shaded, luxurious house, with carriages ready for morning and evening drives, the summer in the city had not been unpleasant, and Deborah unconsciously looked forward to the warm season as promising great ameliorations in her lot. It would be a time when doors and windows could be open, alive with mild airs, of birds and flowers, when the walks to and from her work would be a pleasure, not a pain. Deborah had fairly suffered from the cold during her winter walks, she was so unused to exposure; and yet how abundantly she was provided with warm clothing in comparison with her companion daughters of the poor! She did not realize that in the crowded quarters of the city the open doors and windows only admitted foul odors, that the air grew heavy, not refreshing, that there were no birds and flowers in the back courts and no-thoroughfares.

Under the influence of her dream of summer she one day broke out into song over her work, a little song about violets and roses, dells and fountains, wild-woods and birds and bees.

"A pretty song that is to sing us!" cried one of the girls. "What do we know of such things?"

"Last winter I was sick," said a pale girl named Dora, "and a Bible-woman came to see me. Once or twice a young lady came with her, and she brought me some books to amuse me when I was able to sit up. Some of them I understood, some I did not. There was one about a very rich young man, who had a great splendid home in the country, with magnificent grounds. He invited the house full of working-girls and young men for three weeks—nice decent folks who were worn out and needed rest, young or old; he gave them their tickets and nice clothes to come in. After three weeks they went off, and he brought in another lot. It was like life from the dead to them; it cured them up and made it possible to live the rest of the year."

"Hoh! That was a story. Nothing real like that ever happened. Rich folks invite poor folks! Humbug! They invite the rich," laughed one of the girls.

"Then they do exactly what the Bible forbids," spoke up Deborah.

"Look out there!" cried Martha. "Dora 's going to faint!"

Deborah's strong arm caught Dora and supported her to the window; one of the girls took a box-cover and fanned her, another brought a cup of water, stale and nearly tepid. When Dora was a little revived Deborah said,

"Girls, let us fix her up comfortably in the window and let her rest, and we will all be extra quick and finish up her pile of work with ours, so that she will not lose her day's wages. Cheer up, Dora dear. I will ask you home to tea with me, and Uncle Josiah will get us something real good and refreshing."

"Well, as our foreman is away sick to-day," said Martha, "perhaps we can give Dora a lift. You are real good to think of it."

"I 'll work part of my noon-hour and do a good deal of the work," said Deborah; "I 'm well and strong."

"Do you suppose anything like the story in Dora's book ever really happened?" asked Martha; "I don't."

"But you see, girls," said Dora softly, "the young man had once been poor and knew how it felt."

"Ah, then it might be," said Martha.

"It makes me think of Christ, who for our sakes became poor," said Deborah.

It was not always, indeed not often, that the girls could thus talk while they worked. Their foreman was particularly captious, and whenever he came in the room or passed along the hall, when connected conversation was going on, he stopped it peremptorily, threatening fines or discharge. He seemed to have some grudge against Deborah, and was given to tart remarks for her peculiar benefit. The superiority of her language and manner ruffled him, and perhaps in all her experience nothing was so galling to Mr. Grosvenor's daughter as the rough, sharp, or coarse familiar language and bearing of this rude man. Sometimes she made up her mind to leave the place, he was so offensive.

Such troubles as these had their antidotes in bits of good fortune and kindly encouragement such as what, to Deborah's surprise, happened one morning as she took her place to work, when she found Jean standing beside her.

"Jean, how came you here!" she exclaimed.

"Do you mind?" said Jean with humility. "I can turn my hand to anything, and I can always get a place. I came because you are here, and I thought if I kept near you I might hold out better. I was at church Sunday, and the preacher read how the shadow of Peter passing by cured folks. It makes me better just to stand in your shadow."

Tears filled Deborah's eyes; she had reached a new experience, even the joy of being a joy to others!

"That a friend of yours, Proudy?" questioned one of the girls. "You make a queer couple."

"Do n't speak to her like that!" shouted Jean; "she 's a real lady."

"Ladies are no better than other folks," said Martha crossly.

"Perhaps," said one of the girls to Dora, "you can tell us a story of somebody coming down in the world, and serve 'em right! Did you have such a story to read while you were sick?"

"What did your Bible-woman think of your getting stories to read?" said one girl, with a sneer, to the pale worker. "I 'll be bound *she* gave you only tracts."

"She thought the stories were all right, and some of her tracts were stories, and some were lovely poetry. There were two tracts that I liked, all I understood of them. They were, 'Jane, the Young Cottager,' and 'The Dairyman's Daughter.' Somehow they stayed in my mind, and I understood them and felt them more after I was done reading them, and I think they 've kept with me and made me better ever since. Here 's one in my pocket now."

"I have noticed," said Deborah, looking over at Dora with a pleasant laugh, "that you and I are the two best behaved girls in this room."

"If you are it is n't your blame, it 's your luck," spoke up Martha. "You two have been better brought up, and given more of a chance than we have. You show it. Perhaps you had some one when you were little to tell you to clean your teeth and tidy up your nails and keep a civil tongue in your head. We had n't."

Deborah was suddenly overwhelmed with the memory of how many good things, how many mercies, how much care and helping, had fallen to her lot in life. She contrasted it with the early case of those other girls, and tears came into her eyes. While Deborah was reflecting on her mercies the stately, self-assertive Jean was attracting most of the attention of the other girls in the room. Jean had come there "on the young lady's account." Who were they both, and what was the bond between them? Curiosity has few restraints among these factory girls, and Jean was interviewed speedily.

"What 's your name?" some one asked of the new-comer.

"Jean."

"And are you her kind?" pointing at Deborah. "You do n't look it."

"No more I 'm not. But she says she 's my friend."

"Yes, I am," said Deborah firmly.

"Well, Proudy is pretty good to us common folks," said Kate. "She was real nice to Dora the day she fainted. Took her home to tea."

"She has had me there twice since," cried Dora gratefully. "If I am getting stronger it is because of the help she gives me."

"That beats all; I never heard the like," said Kate.

"I have," said Jean; "the Lord Christ was a friend of publicans and sinners."

"Eh? Keep your tongue, and do n't liken us to publicans and sinners," said Kate, flying into a rage and shaking her fist.

"We are as bad off as your Silvio Pellico in his 'piombi,' that you tell of," said Martha, turning to Deborah, "it is so hot."

"What could be done to make things better for us working-girls who cannot get away from the city?" said Deborah.

"In every one of these crowded districts, in every ward, the city should break a hole, to let out the bad air and let the good air in," said Martha with energy.

"What do you mean? I don't understand you."

"I mean that in every ward--and the more crowded the more it is needed—the city should buy and tear down a block or a part of a block of houses, lay the ground out with clean walks and some grass-plots, and a great many urns and rockeries and high beds of flowers. There should be a fountain in the centre and plenty of stone and wooden benches, and trees—plenty of trees—and boxes of quick-growing vines that should be run up above the seats, like arbors, for shade. Then the poor could walk in these paths and sit on these seats, and see pleasant sights and breathe a little decent air."

"Oh it's water I want, water!" cried Kate, throwing up her arms and panting for breath. "I want cold water to drink, a river of it! Water to bathe in, water to swim in! Oh if I only had water! water!"

A deep ah-h-h went around the hot stifling room where there was no cool drinking water, and where the girls were crowded hot and weary, girls who were denied the luxury of a cool, refreshing bath! Martha spoke up sharply. "Then there should be in every ward a big bathing-house for women, and another for men and boys. They should be free too; for take a girl who has to pay all she earns for food and lodging, and never has enough left for clothes, she cannot even pay ten cents."

Again Kate threw up her arms and cried out sharply, "Water! water! Oh I am choking! I am choking."

"She 's going into hysterics," said Jean, looking at her with the eye of experience, and she led Kate to the window and began to fan her. Deborah ran down the long stairs swiftly. At the corner was a queer little shop where ice-cream was sold—poor stuff for ice-cream, but delicious to one fainting in the heat, hysterical from privation like this poor Kate. Deborah had a dollar in her pocket.

"Give me a dollar's worth of ice-cream," she cried to the keeper of the shop, holding out the coin.

"It is all I have," said the man.

"Give it to me in the can then as it is, and a spoon or two."

"Ay, miss—but—'spose you do n't bring 'em back?"

Deborah flushed, then laughed. In her pocket was her thimble—a gold one. "Take that until I return your can," she said, and so sped up the stairs and fed first Kate and then the others spoonfuls of ice-cream.

This trouble with Kate had interrupted Martha's disquisition, but with the return to work she resumed the theme. "Kate would n't have gone off like that if she could have had a good fresh bath every day to tone her up. But baths are too dear for girls as poor as Kate; she can't pay twenty-five cents a week for the bath-house, simply because she has n't it, and no one will lend it to her."

"Parks and bath-houses! That would be so much help," said Deborah.

"Poor people need amusement as well as rich people," said Martha, "and to get that amusement they are driven to do very foolish or wrong things often. In these parks the city should provide music one or two nights every week. There are plenty of bands in the city, poor men's bands, bands that make their living by playing here and there. And these would be helped in making a living, while the people were entertained, if the city paid a few dollars to the bands to play in these little parks. And then I think if people who know something went about in these parks and tried to teach the people something, it would be of great use. One could go with a telescope and let folks look through it and tell them things about the sun, moon, and stars. Another could take a microscope; another could recite poetry, the kind that stirs folks up to be good and generous and true. The city missionaries and street preachers would find in those parks people feeling pleasant, and with a place to sit down, and they would listen far better to the preaching and singing and praying, and it would be more likely to do them good; for the interest taken in them by good people and the government would make it more easy for them to feel that God is good and cares."

"We 'll never see such good done in our day," said one.

"Well, until the city or the churches, or both, take up the work for elevating the poor, helping them in body and soul, systematically, ward by ward, and give each ward its proper share of help, they wont be helped—that 's all. It is not of much use to open a kindergarten here, a Day Nursery there, a Refuge or a Dispensary in another place, and a cooking-school somewhere else—each out of speaking distance from the other. The things should be near enough together to call upon each other. The children that were kept tidy and decent in the Nursery should have their kindergarten to go to, and their cooking-school after that, and their park and bath-house to keep them healthy, their reading-room or club-room, where they could enjoy themselves without whiskey, their church and mission right where they could get at them. The different branches of work should help each other; put a mile or so between them, and half of the effect is lost."

"You talk like an educated person," said Deborah, in surprise.

"She *is* educated," said one of the girls promptly.

"Then how comes she to work here?" exclaimed Deborah.

"How do *you* come to work here? Among girls in a room like this it is not safe to ask too many questions, Proudy."

"I beg your pardon; I was wrong," said Deborah.

"If we could have all these things that Martha tells about in our wards and if we could have some one to read to us while we work, and we could have rich people who gave us a chance a few times in our lives to get out into the country or by the seaside, to get revived a little, we might do pretty well."

"Things are getting better. Country vacations for poor children, and day excursions for mothers and babies, and the seaside homes some of the good people provide, are all better than things used to be—as I 've heard tell," said one.

"Oh yes," said Martha, "better, but the need is greater. The cities are more crowded; the living is dearer; there is more competition, so that work is scarcer; the poor people are poorer, the rich are richer; and rich and poor hold farther away from each other. I think wicked people are wickeder, and children are in more danger, than they used te be."

"So you see, to wind up with, you'd better not sing of summer to us as you did one day; our lives are all winter—a muddy, foggy, frosty, hungry winter."

"I will do better," said Deborah, "I will sing of the home to which God calls us all."

And she began—

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my sorrows have an end,
In joy and peace with thee?

When shall mine eyes thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold,
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
Thy streets of shining gold?"

She had learned many hymns of late for the Mission.

One Saturday evening when the girls went to get paid, over half of them were summarily dismissed, without warning. The reason was that the factory was overstocked with boxes and the trade was slack. Deborah was one of those dismissed. Those daughters of poverty who were thus thrown out of work gathered on the sidewalk in blank dismay. Two of them cried pitifully.

"I owe every cent of this last wages, and have no more money," said Martha.

"I 'm deep in debt to my cousin," said another. "It is almost impossible to get work at this season."

"This is getting a summer vacation with a vengeance!" remarked Martha.

The crying of the two youngest girls quite broke Deborah's heart. Perhaps they were no worse off than the others, but their exhibition of grief was heart-rending. Deborah had designed going again to the Day Nursery, where the assistant was to leave to take some of the feeble children to the country branch. She took the hand of one crying girl: "Come with me; perhaps I can get you a place in a Day Nursery." She felt that she could not take that place and leave this poor soul crying for bread. It was easier to suffer than to see others suffer. Then to the other one she said, "To-morrow come to see me in Romaine Court; perhaps something can be done for you."

"You 're not half bad, Proudy; your heart 's in the right place," said some of the girls. "What are you going to do yourself?"

CHAPTER IX.

'LIKEWISE LAZARUS EVIL THINGS."

"A puny, naked, shivering wretch,
The whole of whose birthright would not fetch,
Though Robins himself drew up the sketch,
The bid of a mess of pottage."

THE next two weeks were spent in seeking work, though this time Jean, who had avowed her intention of sharing Deborah's fortunes, did most of the seeking. Finally a new place was secured--in the packing-room of a candy factory. Three dollars a week for Deborah, four for Jean, who was strong and active, and could lift and carry. When in her days of splendor Deborah had lavishly bought boxes of candy or had them more lavishly presented by the young men of her set, it had not occurred to her in what weariness her sister-girls had made and filled these beautiful bon-boneries. Then to her the bon-bons had been all sweetness. Now—?

It is an often quoted saying of Terence, "I am a man, and nothing that concerns humanity is indifferent to me." The daughter of Dives, so lately become by adoption the daughter of Lazarus, was rapidly arriving at a point where she could say, "I am a working woman, and nothing that concerns working women is foreign to me. There were depths of enthusiasm in Deborah's nature that hitherto had slept undisturbed; now for the first time they were aroused, and Uncle Josiah was looking with profound interest to the outcome.

One morning at the candy-packing room, a girl of sixteen who worked beside Deborah, hastily placing a newly-filled box beside others on the sill of the open window, happened to push one under the first iron rod that barred the window, and down it went into the street. There was a shrill shriek of delight, and Deborah, looking from the window, saw all the gamins of the quarter suddenly swooping down on the scattered candy, like a flock of crows upon a newly-planted field. The youngsters seemed so overjoyed in their pell-mell rush for sweetmeats that Deborah laughed. But her laughter was cut short by the passionate crying of her young neighbor.

"Never mind," said Deborah; "it was only one box, and you did not mean to do it."

"They 'll charge me sixty cents for it to-night," said the girl. "I had been so careful for a whole month, and got on without a fine! I had promised my little lame sister a treat, because we close early on Saturdays, and we were to ride on a street-car all around the city, and I was to get her soda-water and ginger cakes; and now we can't do it, and it will break her heart, poor little sick thing!" The sobs redoubled.

Deborah herself was not easily moved to visible emotion: it is one of the results of culture to repress outward excitement of any kind. Incapable herself of this open mourning and weeping, Deborah was perhaps for that very reason the more impressed by it in others. It seemed to her that only extreme anguish could produce such an exhibition. She looked at the weeping girl, not knowing how to console her, when a hasty step sounded on the stair, and some one said, "There 's the foreman!" All the girls went at their work vigorously.

"Who threw out that candy?" he demanded, entering.

Deborah, as she heard his step, hastily transferred one of her boxes to her neighbor, and to his demand said coolly, "I am a box short, Mr. Cullen; you 'll fine me for it to-night."

"You may believe I will, sixty cents," said the foreman. "If you like that kind of thing, sling out some more," and he went off.

"You must have money to spare," said one of the girls to Deborah.

"I have n't; but then I have no little lame sister to disappoint."

"It 's awful good of you," said the girl, Bella, "but I ought n't to take it."

"Oh yes. It 's done now. That is all right," said Deborah.

"See here, are you a common working-girl?" demanded one of the packers. "You do n't look or speak or act like it. Are you a lady, playing at being poor?"

"I am not playing at being poor, for I *am* poor," said Deborah. "I am a working-girl, and have only my wages to live on. I have not been a working-girl very long. If I had, I should have tried to learn something so well that I could get a better place than this. I live with an uncle and my old nurse. Our rent is eight dollars a month, and I ought to pay it, but between fines, taxes, and low wages, and being out of work, I have not earned it so far. As for being a lady, if you mean by that, speaking and behaving properly, I do n't see why I should not be that, no matter how poor the work and the wages."

"It is just a burning shame, fining us sixty cents for a box like that!" cried one of the girls; "it is the full retail price, and it is not worth nearly that here in the factory. Rich as they are, they ought not to charge for a lost box."

"See here," said an elderly work-woman, "if there were no fines you girls would be just as careless as you could be. You 'd shoot boxes out of the window every day, and you 'd scatter the candy round the floor and trample it, and go home with your pockets stuffed. You 'd swamp the firm in no time. There 's nothing honorable about you; it is only the fines that make you reasonably careful."

"But the fines are exorbitant," said Deborah; "they should not tax us more than what they pay us for time; nor for property beyond what they sell the property for to other people. That lost box was virtually sold to me, and I ought not to be charged more than the trade for it."

"Good for you!" cried several girls; "and as for being honorable, are we honorably treated? We are spoken to roughly, given the very lowest wages, taxed, fined, and turned off without warning the very minute trade falls off a little."

"That 's the trouble; you measure all by the way you 're treated and by the dealings of men, not by the laws of God. Suppose you are hardly dealt with, can 't you do your work as unto God and not unto men? Can 't you be just and good in yourselves for the sake of being it? Oh I hear plenty from you all about the hard treatment the world gives you, but precious little about doing your duty," said Mrs. Beck.

"You think you have it hard here," said an old woman, "but it is n't to begin with as hard as it is in England. Why, your three dollars are twelve shillings a week, and a London working-girl would think that riches; five-and-six, or less than a dollar and a half, is a girl's wages there, and find herself. I was a mantle-maker in London till my eyes gave out. I made five shillings, that 's only a dollar and a quarter, by sixty hours' hard work—ten hours a day for all the working days of the week. Now and then, by working fifteen or sixteen hours a day, I 'd send it up to a little more. How did I live on that? Why, six of us lived in two little rooms, and clubbed for rent, lights, and fire, and we lived on weak tea and bread without butter, and a bit of bacon and potatoes on Sunday. What do you think of that?"

"I think you were all born fools to put up with it!" cried one.

As the summer days dragged on, hot and dusty, Deborah felt more weary and took less interest in what went on about her. For several days she vaguely noticed that a boy left the candy factory when she did and went home by the same streets some distance behind her; but when she took some quiet by-street she heard the stolid tramp, tramp of his big shoes along the rough pavement. Finally Jean, who always accompanied her, burst out into a laugh. Do you see that Oliver? He follows us like a big dog! Have you noticed it?"

Deborah stopped. "Oliver? Why, it is Oliver!" She waited, and the lad shambled near in shamefaced fashion which made him unutterably awkward. "Oliver, I did not know you worked in this factory. How long have you been there?"

"Two weeks. In the shipping-room."

"How did you come to leave your other place?" she said anxiously.

"Of my own accord, miss," said Oliver, picking up courage. "But it is a rough noisy place down here by the docks, and after a bit it will be dark when you go home—and—I took the place when I had the chance—and—you 'll not mind my going a little behind you? If any one sasses you he 'll find out how much grip I 've got in my hands."

"Thank you, Oliver," said Deborah, deeply touched, "but I had Jean."

"Yes, I know," but she might break out—Jean hersel' might need me to drag her by where she should not go!"

"You 'd ha' a hard time dragging me, boy," said Jean, looking down upon him from her stately height. "And I can take care of miss."

Deborah laughed a little. She had found

out that any woman is her own strongest protector, and she had divined aright the story of Una and her Lion. Yet none the less she felt grateful to these two, and paid them—with a smile.

Such a subject came up for discussion in the work-room one day. A girl remarked that she had been offered six dollars a week and board to tend a bar, and she had a mind to take it, and not starve on three dollars.

"Do you know," said Deborah, "that such an arrangement is against the law? The man who employed you would be subject to arrest. Girls are not allowed to tend bar."

"I did n't know that," said the girl simply. "It is a mean, low business tempting folks to drink. But I would n't tempt, I 'd only sell what was asked for."

Jean looked at the pretty fatuous face with open scorn and wrath.

"Stupid! do you know what you would be doing? Better die of want at once than die in the gutter a drunken reprobate in six months' time. That 's what would have happened to me, only I was made so strong—and only for her;" she pointed to Deborah.

The forewoman spoke up. "The working-girls are their own worst enemies, and harder on themselves than any one else is hard on them. Do they try to make themselves respected? Do they give the very best work that they can? Do they go to church and put themselves where quiet and respectable people are? No: they go to theatres of the lowest, cheapest class; they go to dime museums, and spend in such places the money they should spend for soap and shoes. Do they content themselves with strong, warm, plain clothes? Do they remember that quiet, modest manners are any woman's best ornament? They want flashy clothes, a cheap bonnet covered with cotton ribbon and cotton flowers, some gay, flimsy, showy gown, and a pair of low-cut shoes. I 've known 'em to go without a good strong big cotton umbrella all winter for the sake of carrying a flimsy blue silk sun-shade on Sundays. And how do they spend Sundays? Flaunting around the streets, going to the parks or beer-gardens with low fellows that swear and drink and smoke; bad fellows that they know to be bad, and that self-respecting girls should not go with at all! Then, after such a Sunday, they come to work Monday tired, feverish, vexed, out of pocket, and full of complaints about the employers. If they would take Sunday for peace and rest, for getting some food for their minds and comfort and hope for their souls, if they would go to God's house, and sit there in peace, they 'd find there the light of God's glory, and they would be helped to be better."

"Oh you speak as if we had half a chance!" said Bella. "Why in the attic of the house where I live there are seven girls who live together, and have a sign up, 'Sewing done by the piece.' They none of them have better than a cotton gown, and their shoes are all broken, and the girls are all pale and thin; they are just half starved! Much they spend on cotton lace or cheap jewelry or on dime shows!"

"But you know there are plenty who do just as I say."

"We have been in too crowded quarters even to be real tidy or modest or decent in our feelings," said one girl. "We have always heard swearing and coarse bad talk, and naturally it has ceased to hurt our feelings; we have always seen dirt, disorder, drunken people, and quarrelling and fighting. We have heard religion and God mocked at, and rich people abused, ever since we have heard anything. All our surroundings have been discouraging; we have not been helped to rise, or taught that we could ever make anything real good of ourselves, or get good fortune in any honest, respectable way. It is easy for us to hate people that are better off, and to be as bad as we can."

"That 's it," cried Bella bitterly; "the little children are bad off and made bad, and the girls have hard times as they grow up, and a little later marry one of the bad fellows you spoke of, and have a husband that drinks, swears, knocks one about, uses his wages on himself, and runs off and leaves one with three or four crying children to take care of."

"But there at least one can help one's self," cried Deborah. "No girl is compelled to marry a bad man, to make her own lot worse, and to put more little children in misery and danger! If a girl cannot marry a decent man, who really cares for her, and will be good to her and try to help his family on, why does she marry at all? She is better off as she is."

"Oh well, they all marry; it is the custom; and they are so tired and disgusted with one way of living, they think they 'll try something else. And sometimes the men promise a good deal, but do n't keep their promises, and so it goes. But the dead girls are the best-off girls, only the girls that have never been born—they are the best off of all."

"And they 'd better be precious careful not to be born."

"But tell me what would make things better," said Deborah. "I know a young lady, a very rich young lady, who has gone to France, and she promised me that when she came back she would do something for working-girls, if I would tell her what to do."

"She 'll never remember it. That was all gush. She 'll spend all her money in Paris on nice clothes. You 'll hear no more of her."

"If she 's like you, Miss Deborah," said Jean, "she may remember us and help us. You do."

"She does now because she 's put right here with us," said Maria. "But I say, Deborah, could you have given up what you had just to learn what was wanted, and then give it? Say?"

"I 'm afraid I was too selfish and too ignorant to stand such a test. To make me learn anything God had to take my fortune out of my hands."

"And if you had a chance of course you would go back."

Maria spoke up. "Homes are what we want, homes where we can be quiet and healthy, and respect ourselves, and dare n't bring a bad book."

"Homes!" cried Jean; "I hate the name of them! I would n't be in one for any money! A home that is a real home is all very well, but homes for working-girls *are jails*, that 's what they are. You can 't do this; you dare n't do that; can 't be out after such an hour; can't have company call; must tell where you 've been, and so on. They tie you up and bind you down and make prisoners of you and take away all free, comfortable feeling, and say they 've given you a *home*."

"I did n't mean that kind," said the other girl. "I mean decent homes where we can get reasonable rooms and proper privileges."

"Well, I do n't crave to have the ladies come round me and set up for patterns. They look at you as if you were n't fit to be touched, they curl up their noses and walk on their tip-toes, and feel all the time as if they are so good just to speak to you. I hate 'em!"

Thus spoke a tall girl with much unneeded vim.

"Pshaw," said another. "It is not always that way. Last winter the mission on Callowell Street opened one of the church parlors for a working-girls' club, three times a week, and some of the nicest young ladies that you ever saw came to it. They taught drawing, fancy-work, dressmaking. They made themselves real pleasant, and told us what books were nice to read, and what it was nice to do, and they looked out for the sick and weakly ones and were real lovely to us."

"Wish that kind was n't so scarce," said the tall girl.

"And after all, when a real nice thing is to be done it is the good ones that do it. I know a girl that had gone to make an application for a nice place, and could n't get it, and she was clear discouraged. When she went out on the sidewalk she saw a poor miserable horse standing there stretching out its neck towards a turnip that had been dropped just out of its reach. The girl was crying, but she pitied the wretched horse, so she gave it the turnip, and patted the poor horse on the head, and said, 'You and I have it pretty hard in this world, do n't we?' Well, just then along came one of the greatest preachers in the city, and he heard her, and he guessed just how things stood. So he found out her name and where she lived, and he made friends for her, and got her a first-class place and has helped her along, and she goes to his church and is in a Bible-class, and I tell you she is getting on fine."

"Yes," said Mrs. Beck, "the one greatest and truest friend of all is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the people who have the most of his spirit in them are the most friendly and helpful and tender. If all people had the love of Christ in their hearts the miseries of this world would soon pass away. I mean the bitter part of them. For while the poor, the sick, and the suffering were left there would be help and friends and comfort for them, given in such a tender way that it would not go against the grain to take it."

Such were some of the talks in the workroom. Not carried on all at one time, but in snatches here and there, when the rough foreman was out of the room, and happily he left the control of the room largely to Mrs. Beck and spent his time in other parts of the building. Deborah detailed to Uncle Josiah all that was said, as they discussed what could be done for working-girls, and who could do it.

CHAPTER X.

HARVESTS AND HARVESTS.

"A still small voice spoke unto me:
'Thou art so full of misery
Were it not better not to be?'"

WHILE once Deborah Grosvenor had not given a thought to anything beyond the weariness or amusements, the self-service, of the hour, had busied herself with no deep thoughts, with no wide themes, now she began to vex herself with unanswerable questions about the life around her. Why, *why*, WHY?

Why were some born to extreme misery? Why was evil tolerated in a universe ruled by the Supremely Good? Whence had sprung that awful harvest of sin and sorrow? She thought the story of the primal fall an answer quite insufficient. Why should one sin, one disobedience, bring in its train so many crimes and woes?

"Deborah," said her uncle, "we cannot measure the reproductive power of sin, any more than we can the reproductive power of seed—let us say of wheat. I think if every atom of wheat in all the world were destroyed, except one single healthy seed, and that were dropped in fitting soil and given careful culture, and harvest after harvest its product kept for seed, within ten years the earth would again abound in wheat-fields, and all men would eat bread to the full. When statistics show us how soon the world would be repopulated, if all its inhabitants except two couples were destroyed, we cannot wonder that, given even a few parents who had not God in all their thoughts, the up-growth of vice should be so rampant. The whim or careless habit of the parent becomes the master-passion of the child; the greedy man's son may be a thief, and the self-indulgent idler may ripen in the next generation into the debauché. Getting down seems easy to the human race, mentally, morally, physically, spiritually, financially. It is rising upwards that is hard. When the race started on the down-grade, can we wonder that we find them where we do after six thousand years or so of evil progress? Rather we must wonder at the infinite power of divine grace, that has stayed so many, and has so built an altar to God in many human hearts, and sent up to heaven 'a great multitude whom no man can number.'"

"But, uncle, look at it another way. God is a prayer-hearer: he has made promises to the seed of his children. Do you think that all these miserable wicked thousands have never in all the long line of their ancestors had one who loved God? have never had friend or ancestor or casual acquaintance even who offered a prayer in their behalf? What has then become of the answer of prayers?"

"My child," said Uncle Josiah, "I stood one day in a field where were hundreds of round silver heads of dandelions gone to seed. The south wind came suddenly sweeping over the field, and carried on its wings millions of seeds away, and sowed them over all the land. What profit would it have been to me to go and search for those truant seeds, or to ask the wind where it had carried them? If to find one crop of feathered seeds, borne by one blast of wind, is so difficult, are we likely to be able to trace the myriad prayers which have gone up to God through the ages, and which he has sown over the world in blessings? I cannot answer your question, but every now and again I come upon the answer of some long-hoarded prayer, and from such examples I infer what has become of all. A year ago you were an evil steward, daily accused by the angel before God for wasting his entrusted goods. Your soul was in deadly jeopardy; God was not in all your thoughts. I wondered how long it would be, and how it would be, before God remembered the prayers of your grandmother for you. Deborah, how do you like the answer to your grandmother's prayers? You are being led towards heaven by the *via crucis.*"

"Do you lay to grandmother's prayers all these varied fortunes? Do you suppose grandmother would have had courage to pray if she had seen the method of the answer?"

"I do not know. Perhaps that is one reason why God veils the future, that we may not be frightened out of our prayers by the way of the answer."

"I suppose if some Christians could see how very long it would be before their prayers would be answered, and how hard the road towards answer would be, they would be almost discouraged."

"No doubt. But long to us is short to God; God's time is good time; and when we have entered heaven, time will be no longer, and we shall not know of delay."

Uncle Josiah and Deborah were, like the Hebrews of old, sitting on the house-top. August had come with fierce heat, and Deborah was learning what side of life the summer turns to the city poor. Uncle Josiah, finding the street an impossible place for himself and his niece, and the open windows of their room a little better evening resort, though Nurse Jamieson did not seem to mind it, had discovered an evening haven for himself and Deborah by taking rugs up to the roof, and sitting there above the ill odors and the din and as near the stars as possible. Now that the fires in the house were all out at evening the roof was a fine place for uncle and niece, though not to their neighbors who demanded society and gossip. The house opposite them in the court was a half-story higher than theirs, and every evening Deborah had seen a strange and haggard human face in the opposite attic window. It was a face written with the sins and sufferings of eighty evil years. Almost the lines of humanity had been obliterated, and the face was more like some evil bird watching for carrion than like a woman's countenance. Deborah gazed in the sunken fierce eyes, the tremulous chin, the rough gray head, the defaced features, the withered yellow skin, with a kind of fascination of horror. What course of time and of habits could have made her like that? What was the history of years that had written such records on a face? She tried to imagine that face back to matron maturity, back to youth, back to girlhood, back to childhood's sunshine, back to infant purity. "Long and hard the road thy feet have travelled—far from God!" Seated on a mat and leaning back against a chimney, Deborah studied her opposite neighbor; and with some glimmer of curiosity this strange, fierce-looking old creature, who was never seen to descend to the street, studied the girl, who after her day of toil came home, laid aside her black gingham working-dress, and putting on a muslin robe in white or gray, went up to the roof with the grave old man and sat there conversing with him till the shadows fell.

"Uncle," said Deborah, "what has been such an old woman's terrible story? Do you suppose there were ever any prayers for her?"

"Who can tell? Eternity alone has the answer for many questions."

The idea of the old woman grew upon Deborah with strange insistence.

"Perhaps," said Uncle Josiah, "your mind is thus turned towards this woman because God has an errand for you to do to her from him. Remember, Deborah, what we can do for God is here and now. Why were you sent to this court?"

Thus it happened that one Sabbath evening the old woman did not see the young girl and her uncle upon the roof, but instead there was a tap on her grimy door, and it swung open to reveal a vision. The vision was of a tall girl stately in figure, low of voice, dressed in white, and holding a bunch of flowers which breathed strange fragrance in that dismal attic.

Two or three times each week Uncle Josiah brought home to Deborah a large bouquet of flowers. He got them without cost from a man who had a hot-house and gardens. He always kept two or three bunches of flowers in the room at his mission, saying that they were as good preachers as he knew of. Deborah's room also was made fragrant and radiant with flowers.

At first, in her passion for beauty and her cleaving to these memorials of her former fortunes, Deborah had kept her flowers until they faded. But finally she had taken shame for that, and first for the hand of a dead babe, then for sickness or old age or lonely childhood, she had shared her flowers, and always as she divided and distributed, others came.

"See, Deborah," said her uncle, "there is that giveth and yet increaseth. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

"I wish I had known that when I was rich," said Deborah.

"There was no excuse for your ignorance; it was written in the Book."

"There are none so blind as those who will not see, uncle. Besides, I read the Book very little in those days."

Well, on this Sabbath evening Deborah had divided a large bunch of roses and lilies and azaleas, and now bearing them, stood queenly in the open doorway, while the old woman, dirty, ragged, defiant, yet curious, looked at her from her place in the window.

"What do you want here?" she demanded.

"We are neighbors," said Deborah; "I live across the street, and as you seem never to go out I have come to see you."

"No; I never go out."

Deborah walked towards her. "As you do not go out to meet the summer, I have brought summer to you; here are some flowers;" and she held the bouquet against the grim, brown, wrinkled face.

There is great power in odors. It is said that odors have more virtue in awakening memories than have sights or sounds. Well did Whittier write,

> "Shall greet me like the odors blown
> From unseen meadows newly mown,
> Or lilies floating on some pond
> Wood-fringed, the wayside gaze beyond.
> The traveller owns the grateful sense
> Of sweetness near, he knows not whence,
> And pausing, takes with forehead bare
> The benediction of the air."

The rough face that had been hidden in the flowers softened a little as she withdrew it.

"I must put them in water for you," said Deborah, so she took a pitcher from the table, put water in it from a pail in the corner, and arranging the flowers to hide the broken nose and broken handle of the pitcher, placed them in the window-seat close to the old dame.

"You never go out," said Deborah; "are you lame or sick?"

"No; I am well. I don't want to go out."

"I have seen you here, and you looked lonely."

"You are the first person that has come inside my door for eight years," said the old woman fiercely. "I hate people."

"Not people who have never injured you?"

"Yes, I do—all who are better or happier or younger or richer. I hate you. You are all of those things."

"Well, you will not hate my flowers, now they are yours."

"I feel just like throwing them into the street." Still she did not throw them, and Deborah continued,

"You may like me better when you know me better. How do you live, if you never go out and no one ever comes in?"

"A woman down stairs is paid to buy me things and to put water and fuel near my door. Sometimes I tell her if I want anything especial."

"I am glad that at your age you are not neglected or destitute—that you can have all that you need."

"What difference does it make to you?"

"You are a woman, and are old. I too may some time be an old woman. I have for you what is called human sympathy. Do you not know what that is?"

"No; and I don't want to know."

"Do you like to talk to any one, or to listen to one talking?"

"No, I don't."

"I can sing," said Deborah, "and God has sent me to sing you a song. When that is sung I will go.

"'The Lord my Shepherd is,
He shall my wants supply;
He leadeth me through pastures green
And quiet waters by.'"

"Sing again," commanded the woman when she finished.

Deborah began—

"O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down."

When she finished the hymn she rose to go.

"I'm glad you came; no one has entered here for eight years," said the old woman.

"I shall come again soon," said Deborah.

"I don't believe it."

"But I shall, and I shall bring my Bible, and read to you if it is light enough."

Curious to know why this wretched woman

was so abandoned, Deborah asked some of the neighbors about her. A chorus of exclamations answered her "The most wicked, wretched old creature in the city." "A demon! I wonder she did n't throw a knife at you." "Did n't she curse and swear all the time?" "You ought not to go near her, miss." "Wonder she did n't tear your eyes out." "She 's been to the penitentiary." "She ought not to be allowed in this neighborhood." "Ten years she 's been there." "Some decent folks, that some way belong far off to her, put her there when she got out of the penitentiary. She has so much a week, and she might live decently. For eight years she has n't gone off that floor. She stays like a rat in a hole. Do n't go there again."

"The worse she is, the more she needs me," said Deborah.

"That 's queer doctrine."

"It is Christian doctrine," said Uncle Josiah. "'The Son of man came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick.'"

"Oh you Christian folks are too good for this world."

Deborah went again in a day or two. She took flowers and her Bible, and unasked sat down and read.

The third time she went, lo, the window was cleaned, a chair was scrubbed and put by the window, a piece of carpet shaken and laid by the chair. "This bit of room looks like another country from the rest," said Deborah, taking this place, and again she read and sang. The next Sabbath was her fourth visit. The succeeding Tuesday she found all the room scoured, cleaned, whitewashed, renovated.

"It took two days, me and another woman," said the old dame, "but if you *will* come here in your good clothes, and bring flowers, why you sha' n't get ruined with dirt here."

And now Deborah saw in this hard, bad face a new expression—hunger for the word of life she read. Again she came; the door was open; the old woman was waiting at the head of the stairs. "I had a dream!" she cried eagerly. "I dreamed I got to heaven, and there were crowds of angels there, just like you, and they sang just as you do, and there were words—the words you read; and the flowers were there, such as you bring, and all the air was sweet, and it was summer."

Said Deborah,

"'He stood alone, lost in divinest wonder,
He saw the pearly gates, and jasper walls
Informed with light, and heard the far-off thunder
Of chariot-wheels and mighty waterfalls.

"'And throned within the shining empyrean,
A golden palm-branch in his gentle hand,
He saw his Lord, the gracious Galilean,
Amid the worship of the myriads stand.'"

"Yes," said the woman, "it was like that—all music and light."

The next time Deborah came the woman herself had changed. She was clean and clad in clean garments. Her gray hair, well brushed and shining, lay under a new cap; she was as the once maniac of Gadara, now clothed and in her right mind.

"I want," said Deborah, "to have my uncle come and see you: he knows more than I do, and he can help you more. And I want our minister at the mission chapel here to come too."

"He wont come," said the woman. "He tried it once, but I knew he was coming, and I stood at the stair-head and flung a pail of water over him. The folks in the house wanted to have me arrested for it, but he would not let them; he said I was too old to arrest. I 'd have treated you the same way, only you came up so light. I did n't know you were coming till you crossed the room and put the flowers to my face. They made me weak-like."

"The minister will come. I shall ask him," said Deborah.

Great was the marvel in the neighborhood when the old dame who had been the Romaine Court terror appeared on the street, grave and decently dressed, and walked to church beside Nurse Jamieson. The people said she had been bewitched or charmed by "Miss."

Uncle Josiah had been made one of the officers of the church where they attended, and it was not long before this old woman, called into a new life so late, came to ask admission to the communion.

"To what do you attribute this change? What means did the Lord use?" asked the minister.

Uncle Josiah expected to hear her reply that it was the Christian kindness of his niece Deborah. But no. The old eyes filled with tears; the old lips quivered. "I am eighty years old," said she, "and seventy-four years ago, when I was only six years old, my mother died. She was a Christian; she had taught me of God and had prayed for me. When she was dying she took me in her arms and said, 'My little girl, I am going to God. I have prayed that God would surely bring you to me in heaven, and I know he will.' In all my wild and wicked life I never forgot that. I did not see when or how God could do it. I seemed bound for hell, not for heaven, and yet I felt that some day God would lay a hand on me and answer my mother's prayer and bow my soul to his will. The means God has used are my mother's prayers."

"Deborah," said Uncle Josiah, "what do you think of prayer that has waited seventy-four years for an answer? And yet the Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering and willing that all should come to a knowledge of the truth!"

"But, uncle, why wait so long? Why permit so much sin?"

"'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,'" replied her uncle.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FOUNTAIN OF SYMPATHY.

> "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
> Whom we, who have not seen thy face,
> By faith and faith alone embrace,
> Believing what we cannot prove."

ONE evening a gentleman knocked at Uncle Josiah's door. "I have come," he said, "to thank you here for what has been done for my great-aunt, old Mrs. Jensen, across the street. Once each year I have come here to see what can be done for her, and I was never allowed to enter the den where she lived. I always have found her hateful and hating all the world. But to-day I found a change. Clean, quiet, orderly, sitting there reading her Bible, filled with the spirit of prayer! One of God's own miracles of grace has been wrought in her, and I hear from the people in the house that the young lady here was the instrument."

"Indeed no," said Deborah. "She says, what is no doubt true, that all this is the answer to her mother's prayers, that have lain for years before God's throne."

"At least I thank you for what you have done," he said, "and I want you to help me make my aunt comfortable. I think she will feel better to go on living where she is, and I believe that as an example of what God can do for a sinner, she will be helpful in all this neighborhood. Money is not wanting for all her needs, and I would like to find some nice Christian young woman who would live with her and take care of her when it is needed. I will hire a second room, next to the one she has, and will get any furniture that is needed."

"Nurse Jamieson will be the right one to help you about that," said Uncle Josiah.

"And I think I know of a young woman who would be glad of the place," said Deborah. "She works in the candy factory where I do, and she has lost her position, because she had to be absent, taking care of a sister who has died."

The stranger looked astonished when Deborah spoke in such a matter-of-fact way of "working in a candy factory," but he only said that any girl recommended by Deborah should be engaged. "I am sure," he added, "that you have been of the greatest use to my poor old aunt, whether you doubt it or not."

"Perhaps," thought Deborah, "I shall in the course of my life find many reasons why God sent me down to the Lazarus Quarter to live, and this may be one of them."

As the visitor had said, the conversion of the terrible Mrs. Jensen made a great impression in the neighborhood. It furnished the staple of conversation in Romaine Court for days. "There 's something in a religion that can fetch *her*," said one burly man, smoking on a door-step, to his neighbor. "I have thought there was n't very much in religion, but I vow, this change in the old woman is like changing a bear to a sheep. It beats all nature! I mean to go to the chapel and see what they preach there."

Others seemed to be of the same mind, for the lately slimly attended services at the chapel were crowded by a deeply attentive audience. Once it was impossible to bring hearers to any extra meeting; now whenever the doors were open people came, and all the chapel workers were busy.

Uncle Josiah seemed to have friends on whom he could call for aid in Christian work, for he secured Bibles and hymn-books for the increased audience, and visiting from house to house, he had plenty of reading matter to leave, and where he saw cases of need he found ways of supplying Nurse Agnes with fruit, beef-tea, and other delicacies, and sending her to help mind and body.

"But I do n t believe in pauperizing people," said Uncle Josiah; "they do n't really like it, if they are of honorable feelings, and it does n't pay in the long run. It is better to give them sympathy, the friendly aid and little gifts of neighbor to neighbor, and help them to help themselves."

"Ay, ay," said Nurse Jamieson, "but there 's a warl o' work to be dune, to get a fair start for them. I 't is to teach them hoo weel to use what they ha' wi'oot pining for what they hanna. It is to show them hoo to be decent in their way o' livin'. I just wonner that mony o' the people do no die o' dirt; a' they think o' health-keepin' is to tak' a dose o' medicine. I preach to them, 'Better keep well than mak' well,' but it is hard to mak' them heed. The schules should teach sic things, an' the city should gie squares an' parks an' fountains an' proper inspection o' the hooses. I ken hoo it is. A rich owner kens his hoose is unsatisfactory in a sanitary way, but a bit bill slipped intil some one's han' will mak' the report a' richt."

"Next winter I 'll give some lectures on sanitary matters, and have a stereopticon and show them the results of dirt, and scare them out with bacteria and spores and germs," said Uncle Josiah, laughing. "But now I shall have a different meeting. I shall have a meeting at the chapel for women and girls."

"What 's to hinder the men from coming?"

"Nothing; except that I shall invite all the girls and women, and give them cards with the subject of the hour on them. The cards shall be square white ones, tied with a little blue ribbon; they will serve as a souvenir."

"They will cost money too," suggested Deborah.

"Not very much; and I have a fund, from a man who is interested in mission work, to draw on for just such things."

"And what is this subject for women, and not for men? And what do you, as a man, know especially to tell these women?"

"I shall tell them just what I shall tell men some other time. I invite them alone to make their meeting more sociable, and to arouse their curiosity in what is entirely their own. As to what I know to tell them, I know as a human heart what goes home to human hearts, and my subject will be the 'sympathy of Christ.'"

"That is a very good subject," said Deborah, "and I think a little talk about sympathy will go home to some of those lonely, poor, neglected hearts. Poor creatures! they toil unhelped and unthanked generally. They know so little of sympathy and gratitude that they cannot even cultivate such emotions in their children to return to their comfort."

On that Sabbath afternoon the chapel-room was full of girls and women for Uncle Josiah's talk about the "Sympathizing Christ." Deborah had invited the girls from the factory, and many of them came. The chapel was a new place, and the neighborhood of Romaine Court was a little better than most of them lived in, so they came more readily.

Deborah had for several weeks been practising hymn-singing with some of the usual attendants upon the chapel services. She had never expected to set up as a music mistress, but what she knew was quite sufficient for the need, and she began to take real interest in developing voices that had any promise in them, and in having the hymns well learned, sweetly sung, and clearly pronounced. Uncle Josiah thought that the singing should serve as part of the preaching, and part of the praising and praying also, plainly spoken, so that all might understand. After several hymns had been sung Deborah sang alone, "Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish."

To her horror, some of the factory-girls, regarding the chapel as about the same as a concert-hall, clapped her vigorously.

But all these noisy demonstrations died away into curiosity and interest when Uncle Josiah read the chapter and began to speak of Christ the human and divine in his errand among men.

Then he spoke of sympathy and its healing mission to worn and sorrowing hearts. Christ, he told them, was the constant and tender sympathizing Friend, lightening all human sorrows by his compassionate sharing of them.

"Now," he said, "I shall show you that Christ, by his nature and experiences, is fitted to sympathize with us human sufferers. And then I shall give you some instances where Christ exercised this blessed and helpful gift of sympathy. Take your Bibles, and let us seek out these texts together, and then ask whatever questions you like, or suggest other texts, or read them. This is a social meeting. Do n't let us be afraid of each other. Now if you will look at Hebrews, the fourth chapter and fifteenth verse, you will find these words, 'For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.' You see there that in his human nature, subject to temptations and the sufferings of human flesh, our Lord is fitted to sympathize with us. Now look at Matthew, eighth chapter and seventeenth verse, and you will read, 'Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.'"

"Oh ay," said Nurse Jamieson, "and weel does the hymn say, Maister Josiah,

> 'Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
> A fellow-feeling for our pains.'

It is a thocht that has helped me to bear mony an ane a little better than I would hae dune my lane."

"Very good," said Uncle Josiah; "I wish you would all say what you think. Now look at Luke, twenty-fourth chapter and part of the twenty-sixth verse: 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?' That is, it was needful that he should suffer for our sakes."

"Yes," said old Mrs. Jensen in her rough voice, "and he did it willingly for us sinners. That 's what comes home to me—of his own accord, for such a wretch as I have been, loving to do evil!"

"Turn again to Hebrews, the second chapter. Deborah, you read us the tenth verse."

"'For it became him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings,'" read Deborah.

"Now then, if Christ, as Captain of a suffering people, became a better Captain for them by experiencing suffering himself, I think we should beware of rebelling against trouble, as if it were undeserved or a cruelty inflicted upon us by God."

"I know I never got half as much evil as I deserved," said Mrs. Jensen; "but, sir, I have seen some very good people who had very much trouble—much more than ever I had. And mine was of my own bringing about, and theirs was not so."

"But I mak' no doot," said Agnes Jamieson, "they guid folk made no a great to-do and quarrel aboot their trouble. The better they were the more quietly they took the ill."

"Yes," said Mrs. Beck, Miss Grosvenor's factory friend, "that is like the Lord, 'for he was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.'"

"Read the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, please, Mrs. Beck," said Uncle Josiah.

"'Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

"You see, these verses tell us why Christ by his nature was formed to sympathize with a feeble, sorrowful, suffering people.

"Now, Bella, you read Isaiah 63:9."

Bella, Deborah's fellow-worker in the candy factory, had taken her place by the organ; she loved singing passionately—a love that frequently led her to music-halls and cheap concerts, where she fell into dangerous company. Deborah thought of that, as with a flush on her pretty childish face Bella read from the place which Deborah pointed out to her. Bella read well; Uncle Josiah was careful in his choice, for many of his audience could neither read nor write. Strange products, these, of nineteenth century civilization!

"This is a very lovely verse," said Uncle Josiah—"'he bare them and carried them all the days of old!' The image is of a kind shepherd carrying the young lambs, the tired, sick sheep."

"Ay, ay," said Jean, carried back to her Scotch tongue by association, "I hae seen that long syne at home! Wait a wee! let me find that too, an' mark it in my ain book. Read it again, sir; that goes to the heart!"

"Ah, but you who can read and have a book to take home with you are lucky," sighed a poor store-cleaner.

"Well, I mean to have a book with that verse in it, and read it, whatever the priest says," cried her neighbor. "'In all their affliction he was afflicted'! He knows it all, ah!"

"Now, Deborah, let us hear the twenty-third Psalm sung," said Uncle Josiah; "that fits right in here; it is the Shepherd Psalm." Deborah noticed how Jean's heart was touched, and how her often defiant eyes filled with tears. This Psalm carried her back to her mother and her home.

Dora was there, seated next to Jean; on Sundays Dora usually found some excuse for getting a sight of Deborah; she seemed to find strength and courage in Deborah's strength.

She pulled Jean's sleeve. "This makes me think of my tract, the one I told you of, the Dairyman's Daughter. I'll lend it to you. It will help you." She drew the little soiled, ragged tract from her pocket.

"No, it wont help me," said Jean, eying the treasure with disfavor; "nothing like that helps me to religion; it has to be lived into me by some one like—her," she nodded towards Deborah. She had spoken louder than she thought.

"Jean," said Uncle Josiah, "we are studying about the living Christ, who willingly came from glory to bear our burdens and carry our sorrows. My little maid, read this verse that I have found for you in Mark, telling how our Saviour was hungry."

A little girl of nine rose up beside Uncle Josiah to read. "Bless the child," whispered old Mrs. Jensen, "she's beginning early; the Lord send she's never hungry.'

With the fresh tones of the child's voice mingled from the street the sound of another child's voice, a younger child, crying piteously. Deborah could not endure it her heart had grown very soft and tender to little ones. Formerly she had paid no attention to children; all those about her had been well fed and well dressed and overwhelmed with luxuries, while nurses or French governesses stood always at hand to admonish "do this," or "say that." Deborah found these infants of the rich little attractive; they had lacked spontaneity and had failed to win her heart. That was because she had had but little heart to win; she had not loved first, to be loved in return; she had not developed towards herself the sweetness of those child-angels of happy homes! Now the children of the poor wrung her heart; all that was repulsive in their persons and surroundings made her only more tender towards them. When she heard the wailing of this unseen child in the street, she left the organ and went out softly. She found, lying on the dirty pavement, a miserably ragged and dirty baby of about two years old. It had fallen and cut its face, and a little line of blood mingled with tears and dirt. No one had come to help it. It lay there in its hopeless misery, abandoned by all. Deborah picked up the child, and seeing a girl at a near window, demanded, "Who owns this baby?"

"Nobody," said the girl roughly.

There was a pail of water on a bench in the little lobby before the Mission Room. Deborah sat down there, and with her handkerchief bathed the slight wound and washed the baby's face and hands. Then, as there seemed to be nothing else to do, and she would be wanted at the organ, she returned to her place, carrying the child. Uncle Josiah was saying,

"Sometimes friends forsake us, or those whom we love are ungrateful and unkind. Husbands desert their wives, or children are undutiful to parents. Christ has been through all such troubles; his friends forsook him and fled; his brethren did not believe on him. The blows fell on his heart before they reached ours."

"Yes," said the store-cleaner, "that child's father ran away, and then the poor mother died. She died two weeks ago; she struggled as long as she could. The child is knocking about from one to another, with no one rightly to care for it."

"It is one of Christ's little ones; we must look to it," said Uncle Josiah. "Christ was the Prince of outcast children; he fled as a babe from the wrath of Herod into Egypt."

The little child sat looking up into Deborah's earnest, kind, pitiful face. That face seemed to awake in its little aching heart a sense of all its woes; it put up its lips, tears rolled from its big eyes, and sob after sob shook the poor frail thin body. Deborah's heart was nearly broken: what should she do? An older sufferer could ask for what was needed, but this small, dumb thing could only sob in its pain. She gathered the desolate one to her bosom and bowing her face upon its tangled head sobbed in sympathy. Uncle Josiah was silent; to him these tender tears were as a rain from heaven: God himself had touched Deborah's heart and changed it so. The women looking on cried a tear or two, and all hearts were softened and made more open to the message of the sympathy of Christ. Jean rose and went out.

Uncle Josiah opened to the fourth chapter of Mark, and read of Christ in the storm. "Have you thought how very tired he must have been, sleeping so heavily in all the storm? And the words that arouse him are unjust words, 'Carest thou not that we perish?' Remember that he does care, that he always cares, and he is with us in every storm; we can cry to him."

Jean returned and sat down by Deborah. "Here is what the puir bairnie wants," she whispered; "it is hungry. Look, I got a bun and a cup of milk." At the sight of food the child sat up and held out both hands with a gasping cry. Jean put the cup to its lips. Deborah broke off a fragment of bread and dipped it in the milk to feed the hungry one. Engaged in these services for the child, these two heads bent together; Jean's red curls—cropped in a prison!—rested against Deborah's smooth, dark, shining hair. It was a tender sight, and moved Uncle Josiah so that he could scarcely control his voice as he rose to read passages that told of Christ's sympathetic love of children, his gracious sympathy for mothers.

The child, having satisfied its hunger, lay back against Deborah's arm and slept. She gave it to Jean when Uncle Josiah requested them to sing, "When I survey the wondrous cross."

After that came the story of the woman who had been bowed with a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years and was loosed from her bondage on the Sabbath day.

"Praise God," said old Mrs. Jensen, "that reads like me! That is my story! Satan bound me, and Christ loosed me—oh, blessed be his name!"

"Pray for me," said Jean, lifting her face from above the child; "I need help: I often feel as if I were falling into the fire!"

"Jean," said Uncle Josiah, "when the flames kindle upon thee thou shalt not be burned, for Christ has prayed for thee that thy faith fail not."

When the meeting was over Deborah went

home carrying the child. "What wull ye do with the bairnie, my dear?" asked Agnes.

"Wash it first," said Deborah, the practical.

When she had the youngster sitting in a tub of warm suds, its few poor rags looked so terribly filthy that she calmly put them all into the fire. Therefore, when the baby was scrubbed, and her hair cut, washed, and curled, lo, a sweet, clean little cherub without a thread of clothing! But Deborah was a young woman of resources; two pocket-handkerchiefs, a towel, and a box of small safety pins provided her a little waist and a skirt; the child smiled, and played with the pins that fashioned and held together these garments. Nurse Jamieson stood by laughing.

"My lambie, you mind me of when you were a bit lassie, playing with your dolls. Many 's the time your nurse had to take you and your elegant dolls, clothes and all, out of the bath-tub! You were aye fond of water."

"But this baby cannot be laid on the shelf like a doll," said Deborah, "and what am I to do with it? Nobody's baby! and a creature to live for ever. O Uncle Josiah, what a terrible world it is!"

"As for the child," said Uncle Josiah, "to-morrow I can take it to my old home, where there is a good woman who will gladly be a mother to it. She has been wanting to adopt a child for some time."

"Then I should think you would have found her one before," said Deborah with vivacity. "Will she love this one and be kind to it?"

"I can answer for that; nothing shall be lacking."

Deborah mused a moment. "Uncle, things seem to come so easily and so exactly to your hand, in working among the poor! How does it happen? You are surely just the one for a city missionary. Do all the city missionaries have such friends back of them as you seem to have?"

Nurse Jamieson laughed and began to set the table.

"I wish," continued Deborah, "that I had my money back, so that I could keep two or three people busy providing homes for just such pathetic, pitiful little creatures as this! Oh me, how I have wasted opportunity!"

When Uncle Josiah started off with the child next day, Deborah said, "Tell your Mrs. Willis to write you how the little one prospers, and tell her to call her Theodora, and to feel that she is God's gift."

CHAPTER XII.

GATHERED IN SORROW'S GARDEN.

" Lest she should fall and perish utterly,
God, before whom lie ever bare
The abyssmal depths of personality,
Plagued her with despair."

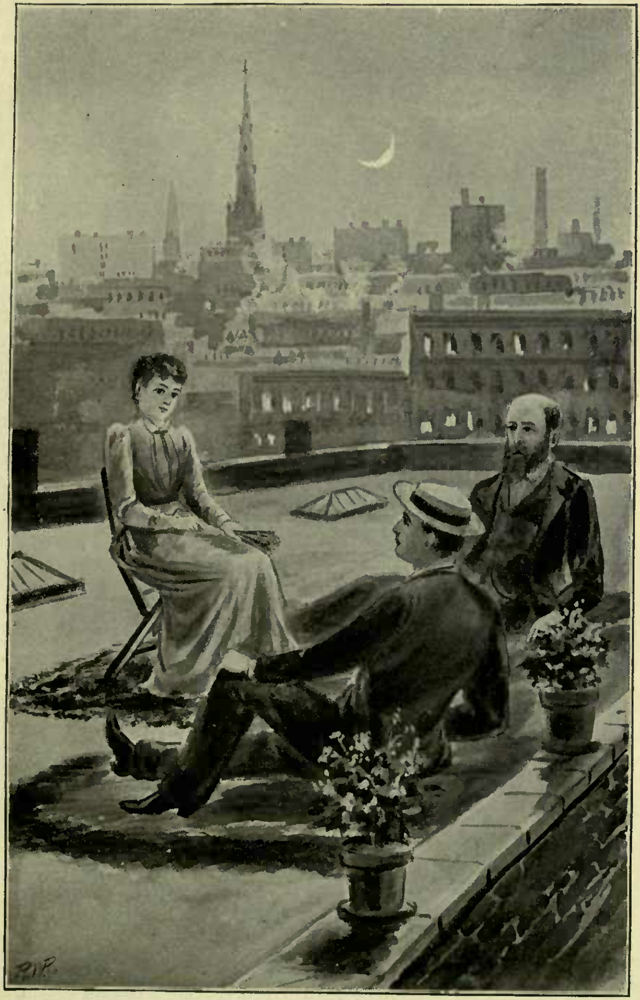
WHEN Deborah went with her uncle to the Sunday afternoon meeting it had not occurred to her that she would there receive any benefit to herself. Of late she had thought so much more about religion, and spoken of it so much more, that she had become pretty well satisfied with her spiritual experiences; she hardly thought of herself as needing any further enlightenment. But she had begun to lead a life of self-abnegation and duty-doing and of thought for others, so, as Uncle Josiah wished her to go to the meeting, and her music and example would be alike useful, she deprived herself of an afternoon rest and went to the chapel. Then to Deborah it happened as to one who sees some object long familiar in a new light, or as suddenly filled with new glory. Deborah had thought that she knew about the life of Christ, his character, his work, and understood, even by some personal experience, what he might be to the human soul. But as she watched those worn, anxious, eager faces, and heard the words about the sympathy of Christ, words which by some thirsty souls were drunk in as the parched ground receives the summer rain, this seemed some strange, new truth which she was hearing. Had Christ ever before seemed to her one half so human, one half so divine? She had secretly felt that she, Deborah Grosvenor, born in the house of Dives, had accepted very patiently and very beautifully the change in her fortunes; that she had been very gentle, gracious, and condescending in making friends with these working-girls. But oh what was all this compared to that "infinite stoop" beside which all human lowliness seems only pride or hard compulsion; what was all her making common cause with these toiling women, compared to the grace of Christ, who made himself of no reputation and came seeking and saving the lost?

Now this new work which began in Deborah's soul made her first hate and suspect herself, accusing herself of hardness and of hypocrisy, and even despairing of having any part at all in the Lord Jesus, seeing that she had been content to know him so slightly and esteem him so little. She also weighed her recent work in the balances, putting the Christ method in the one scale and her own in the other.

"I have been sympathizing with a class and on general principles," said Deborah. "Except in a few cases, I have felt as if it would be a degradation to my refinement to give love to those struggling, apathetic, half-tidy, often noisy neighbors of mine. What I have given has been dole and duty, not the spontaneity of the heart pouring out its treasure in sympathy, giving love first and then service. Do I *love* any of these people about me? Honestly, no. Do I *love* even good Nurse Agnes? I fear—no; and yet she loves me most devotedly. Have I cultivated love even to my Uncle Josiah, my last and only relative? I have loved myself so much more than that good, gray head! And all the while how much Christ has loved me!"

And now into the soul of Deborah grew a new, deep love for Christ, and a longing for his daily companionship; and side by side with this love for him grew a true love for the lost whom he came to seek and to save.

Her heart being now enlarged, she began to wonder where Oliver spent his evenings, and found that he spent many of his hard-earned dimes for lessons in vice taken at a Dime Museum and a Dime Varieties Theatre. Nor was



Mr. Grosvenor's Daughter. Page 185.

Oliver the only boy who did this. She beheld hundreds of boys going headlong to perdition, not a hand held out to save. But Oliver was the one that might be within her grasp. What could she do for Oliver? Sacrifice the one thing that reminded her of former rest and ease, her evenings on the house-top, where Uncle Josiah had set plants in pots and tubs brought from that very obliging, philanthropic florist? Deborah sighed and hesitated; but Christ "pleased not himself!" Oliver was invited to the house-top! She brought there for him books and papers. She played dominos with him and Uncle Josiah played checkers. She told stories and remembered riddles, and Oliver travelled into fairyland when she told tales of foreign countries where she had been.

"Aunt Hodge says I'm a plague to you, coming every night," said Oliver bluntly; "but I can't keep away now unless you chase me away. Seems like up here was just heaven!"

Yes, it was worth this last little sacrifice. The boy had a cleaner skin, a clearer look, better manners, softer tones, nobler thoughts, higher principles day by day.

While Oliver was entertained on the house-top, Jean sat with Nurse Agnes below and talked of Scotland and of childhood and of "mither," and Nurse Agnes' sweet old quavering voice sang "Rouse's Version."

Deborah was learning how to draw near to the girls at the factory in a real heart sympathy, to find out their private grief, and to deal, not in generalities, but in especial comfort for especial needs. This one had an old blind father living with her; he had been a church-goer once, but now he could not read, and churches were so far away from their quarter. Here was a case for Uncle Josiah. Deborah told him about the blind man, and Uncle Josiah visited him, read to him, sent a boy to lead him to the Mission Chapel, and found a lame man whose eyes were good, who agreed to read often to the blind man, Uncle Josiah paying some small stipend for the service. Another girl had a sick mother, and to her Deborah sent flowers, and even fruit, which came from Uncle Josiah's ever liberal florist. To the lame sister of Bella she sent little toys, cards, and mementos which Uncle Josiah was always finding "where the goods were stored." While all this lightened the burden of sorrows a little, and made Deborah the most popular girl in the packing-room, it was very discouraging to see how little all her best efforts accomplished. As she and Uncle Josiah sat on the house-top, she said, "Uncle, as I read somewhere, it is all a beggarly little effort to alleviate human misery by dividing eighteenpence equally between thirteen poor people."

"As far as that goes," said Uncle Josiah, "if the thirteen poor people are in desperate need, and eighteenpence is all that we have, let us divide it. Common sense uses the tools it has. Castaways on a desert island, and needing a boat, do not refuse to make a raft of logs and bamboo bindings where there are not tools at hand for a better craft. When only one human soul is helped and uplifted, who can measure the good that may grow out of that? If one man were helped, really helped to be better and happier, to-day, and two to-morrow, and four next day, and eight the day after, how long would it take to alter the moral status of humanity? This is a kind of arithmetical progression that it would be well to study."

"Yes; but oh how I want to do some great thing!"

"It is God's part to open the gate; you have to stand ready to enter!"

It was one morning at the factory when the heat and the noise and the smells from the street were more intolerable than ever, when after talking of their troubles for a time one of the girls was threatened with hysterics.

"Fan her," said Mrs. Beck; "but where is a fan?"

"Give her a drink of water," said another.

"Water! They have not filled the cooler since yesterday morning; and a pretty cooler it is, with never any ice allowed us."

"Let me bathe her head with it any way," said Deborah; "and now, Katy, rest a while. I am a fast worker; I will hurry and do my work and yours, too, for an hour."

Katy leaned her head, sobbing, against the window. Twenty girls in that room, and no seats but one chair and a couple of old boxes. Bad for them to stand so all day, was it? Never mind—only working-girls, and the owner must make money, even if it was the price of blood.

"If we worked in Jews' shops we should be better treated," sighed one. "The Jews always give the best treatment; they have wit to see that in the end it pays better."

And now into the hum of angry or despairing voices came the soft strains of

"Art thou weary, art thou languid,
Art thou sore distressed?
'Come to me, saith One, and, coming,
Be at rest.'"

Thus sang Deborah. The spell fell on the other girls, and they listened. But just as calm and better cheer were coming, the foreman, loud and angry, tramped in, scowling and snorting. "Stop this din! I wont stand the row you girls keep up here."

"There is no row, Mr. Cullen," ventured Mrs. Beck; "all are busy."

"This room is for working, not for singing; do you hear that?" and Mr. Cullen planted himself before Deborah, belligerent.

"The girls are hot and tired," said Deborah, "and they are helped, not hindered, by what I am singing. You know and have said yourself that this room gives the best work for the hours of any; and here we never quarrel."

"I want no talk from any one," said the foreman; "and as for your singing, be done with it, and hold your tongues, all of you."

Deborah laid down the box she was filling; her face flushed, and the old-time pride of the daughter of Dives rose up in her eyes. "I am going down to speak to the firm," she said, and walked out of the packing-room, stately, her head held high. She went down to the office where the partners were seated each at a desk, each smoking. Neither of them took his cigar from his mouth; each one felt that he was not expected to treat a working-girl as if she were a lady. "I came," said Deborah, "to complain of your foreman, Mr. Cullen. The upper room is excessively hot; there is not a fan in the room; no ice is allowed us; the water in the cooler has not been renewed for two days; we have but one chair and two empty candle-boxes for seats, and when the girls are faint they are obliged to lie down on the floor. To-day I was trying to calm their restlessness, and cheer them by singing to them, and Mr. Cullen came in suddenly and with abusive language ordered me to be silent. Is there any law here against singing a hymn when it does not interfere with the work, but rather helps it on?"

"There 's no law against singing, but there is a law that the foreman must be obeyed. How else could we get on?"

"True; but when the foreman is rough and cruel, is there to be no complaint and no redress?"

"No! for then there must be investigation, and that takes time, and time is money. Put up with what you get, or go; that is all we can offer."

In came Cullen. "Oh you 're here, miss! What have you made out by complaining? In my view the sooner you are out of this establishment the better. You are one of the Socialist women, stirring up the girls to strikes and rebellions and unions."

"Pay what is due her, Cullen, and say no more. That will be the shortest way out of it," said the senior partner, resuming his writing.

Thus it happened that Deborah only returned to the upper room to get her hat and her sun-umbrella.

"I 'm glad you 're out," said Uncle Josiah. "A gentleman whom I know is going to send six children from the slums down to an old farmhouse by the sea for a month. The house is empty, but has some furniture—enough to get on with. He will send down two young women to do the work, and you can go and be matron and house-mother. Do you know of the right girls to go with you?"

"Yes!" cried Deborah; "let me take Bella and her little lame sister, and poor sickly Katy. They 'll get on. If they do n't, I will teach the children to help them."

Within three days Miss Deborah Grosvenor was off for an outing unprecedented in her experience. She had charge of six children from the slums, and of two young girls who were simply such children grown up and toned down by hard work. Very little angelic in any of them. They had been born and cradled and bred in the roughness of poor homes, with hard-worked mothers, drunken fathers, no religion, no education—the street for playground and educational institution. Deborah was appalled at the language which she heard. And yet how much she found in all these rough diamonds to love and admire! She concluded that, left to their fate, she would not have been half as good as the worst of them! Six weeks she stayed at the old farmhouse by the sea. The rooms were scantily furnished, the beds were hard, the table was plain, but after all she enjoyed her outing. The daughter of Dives learned to dig sand-wells and build sand-houses and make mud-pies; to pick blueberries and wild plums, hunt for wintergreens and fish with pin-hooks. She heard more slang than in all her life before, and she was told tales of fights and ejectments and arrests and hair-breadth escapes that made her shudder; but what then? these were facts, and thus she enlarged her experiences. Two years before, the richest of toilets, a carriage and pair and two servants, were her reasonable accompaniments of a seaside visit. Now two-dollar boots and a rough hat, a gingham gown and cotton gloves, were her array, and a set of freckled gamins were her attendants.

Home once more, and the duty of looking for a place once more pressed upon her. Perhaps places were more plentiful than in the spring. But after three days of walking, applying, answering advertisements, she was again discouraged. One afternoon she was sitting alone at home; Nurse Agnes had gone out to help a sick neighbor. There was a knock and a brisk, pleasant-faced young man entered.

"Are you Miss Grosvenor? I come from Rendel Brothers' shirt factory," he said. "They wish to engage you as forewoman for the finishing-room."

"I think you must have made a mistake," said Deborah, "and were sent not to me, but to some one else."

"Oh no, indeed. I have it all right—name, number, and all."

"Still there must be a mistake, because I know nothing of the business at all. I never saw a shirt made, and do not know what is done in the finishing-room," said Deborah honestly.

"Why, it is easy," said the young man; "they make the stud-holes and the button-holes, and finish off the ends of the thread, and sew on the red initial letters, and—well, such small things as that."

"But for a forewoman they need one who understands."

"You will have an opportunity of learning your duties first. They sent for you. You 'd better take a good thing when you get it, and they want you. They sent for me just that way as assistant bookkeeper. You 'll come up and see them to-morrow, wont you? Twenty-five dollars a month it is. The firm are going in for new fads: liberal wages, ventilation, good treatment, the do-as-you'd-be-done-by style. Of course they'll bankrupt at it. If it was the possible way, other firms would have tried it. But it will be fine while it lasts. Some new partner has gone in who believes in an all-round arrangement and bringing Christianity into your business. I reckon it can't be brought, or some of it would have got into business sooner. What they are after is a forewoman who has manners and sympathy, and will try to improve the girls. You can pick up the finishing, and you look as if you could keep order and put down any fooling. You'll be up there to-morrow morning?"

"Yes," said Deborah, "I will go over and see what is wanted."

"Perhaps it is just the opening that is needed for you," said Uncle Josiah. "You may do good there."

"But it seems dishonest to take a place for which I am not fit."

"Make yourself fit."

"Ay, ay," said Nurse Jamieson, "tak' what is offered ye. 'He that winna when he may, shanna when he wud.' It is an auld saying, 'Birth 's gude, but breeding 's better.' Ye hae baith birth an' breedin, and ye may mak' them o' use in a shirt factory as weel as in yer ain drawing-room when ye had ane."

"It seems as if I'd be taking the place of some one who by knowledge of the work had a better right to it! I give out so soon. Why have I not more staying power to endure hardship like the other girls?"

"You were no brought up like the lave, dearie," said Agnes.

"'For daisies liven weel
Whaur roses canna grow.'"

"I ceased to be a rose long ago," said Deborah. "I belong now to the kitchen-garden order of vegetation. Uncle, if this great thing does happen, I shall try and make a place for Jean and Oliver, they have followed my fortunes so faithfully."

Applying with some misgiving at the office of Rendel Brothers, Deborah was well received. "We had heard of you and think you are the person we want here. Honest work for fair wages, and mutual good offices between employers and employed—these are our ideas. We want to raise the moral and mental status of our working-girls. We want to put them in a fair position to work well, and then we shall expect them to work well. Keep order, demand faithfulness and thoroughness, and try to make the girls feel that we are friends and not enemies. As for the finishing work, you can apply your taste and judgment to that, and an experienced workwoman will give you the points as to shirt-finishing. The foreman of the establishment will tell you all that you need to know about the business."

So Deborah, much to her surprise, found herself set up as forewoman in a great factory, where she was to put in operation Christian and philanthropic principles, as well as demand good work in fine shirt-finishing.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE.

"Go back to earth, thou pilgrim empty handed,
Go back to hunger and the toilsome way;
Complete the task which duty has commanded,
And win the palm thou hast not brought to-day."

In the shirt-factory Deborah found herself in an entirely new atmosphere. The gentleman who represented the firm treated her with courtesy, even deference. Deborah, who had not yet become stereotyped in those manners with which it is supposed to be proper for the hireling to treat the employer, found herself sometimes falling into familiar conversation with him, as easy, perhaps a trifle more sensible than her aforetime interlocutions with the sons of Dives.

"I do not understand why you offered me this position. I fear, in my ignorance of shirt-making, I may prove a failure."

"We especially wanted some one to help us uplift our girls. It is not easy to find a woman really interested in the improvement of the factory girls, knowing what they need, and able to command their respect. From what we heard of you we felt that you would be the right one for this position."

"In searching for work, and in working in various establishments," said Deborah, "I have gained some experience of the girls, their needs, their disadvantages. I have learned to sympathize by being of them and sharing their troubles. But while I have learned something of what is needed, and greatly desire to ameliorate the condition of workers, I have also grown nearly hopeless of improvements! So much money, so much personal sacrifice, will be required. Who will give themselves and their income to God in such work? How can the wants of the working classes be supplied? I have found out that the profits of many business houses are not large, competition is so sharp. Perhaps I realize more fully than some what a small margin some of our manufactories have."

"No doubt; but if we cannot do everything that we would, let us still do something. There may be much that is beyond our power; let us do what is within our power to uplift our girls. We have here over one hundred women, mostly young, working for us. The wages are low; we shall try to raise them by degrees, but meantime we shall try to improve the social, moral, and physical condition of the girls, so that they may use their wages in the best way possible. Speak your mind, Miss Grosvenor—what are the immediate needs?"

"In all my experience of factories," said

Deborah, "fair ventilation and toilet facilities are the exception, not the rule. Health would be improved, working force conserved, comfort and propriety of appearance much increased, exhaustion, irritation, fainting fits, headaches, largely prevented, if ventilation were good and the dressing-room comfortable. You have only two windows in our room that let down from the top: some cannot be raised at all. You have one large dressing-closet, in good order, for a hundred and twenty-five workers! In the candy-factory there were two; in the box-factory only one, and that one out of order. The close stuffy working-rooms and lack of water cause dizziness, faintings, hysterics, dull, sallow complexions. The girls feel that they have a right to such conditions of work as shall enable them to preserve whatever they have of strength and beauty. They can hardly be expected to work with zeal and good cheer when their lives and health are disregarded."

Mr. Ames made a note in his book. "We want a model establishment: speak your mind," he said calmly.

"The girls do not have time to go home for dinner. They bring a lunch. At noon they should be out of the work-rooms, and the rooms should be thrown open and well aired. The girls need a change at noon-time, and now, unhappily, some of them get it by going out with men acquaintances to saloons or to beer-shops. At these bars the girls hear bad language, meet ill-disposed persons, and acquire a taste for liquor which in the end sends many of them to the penitentiary. These noon associations also end often in hasty, unhappy marriages. We should have a room with seats, a table or two, a melodeon, a few pictures, some books, papers, and magazines; a stove where the tea, coffee, soup, or milk can be heated; a few simple appliances for gymnastics. The gymnastics will straighten the bent shoulders, broaden the sunken chests, give a better poise to the drooping heads. What a different looking set of girls we should have! And improvement in health, looks, and associations would soon bring improvement in behavior."

"Behavior? That is it. That is what we are wishing to improve."

"I think the first and finest method for obtaining that improvement," said Deborah, "is for the employer to be personally acquainted with the workers. Let him go among them as a friend, interested in their welfare, not as a sharp critical task-master. Giving them kindness and justice, he will inspire them to give kindness and justice in return."

"I have no doubt that that is so. I will bear it in mind. Help me, by noticing what goes on. If you hear of wrongs practised in this establishment, let me know it and they shall be redressed."

"It was a wrong that brought me here just now," said Miss Grosvenor. "In the bosom-making room there is a girl who came by some accident late this morning. It is a raw rainy day; the girl was locked out by the foreman for being late. She had to walk the streets for nearly five hours, without either umbrella or overshoes! Is she made of iron to endure such exposure as that? She is in my room now, drenching wet. I have had her take off her shoes and her poor ragged stockings, and rub her feet with the only crash towel that has been put at the service of one hundred and twenty working-girls! This girl is exhausted, nearly fainting. Did a half-hour's lateness, caused by sickness in her home, deserve such a barbarous punishment?"

"That is outrageous!" cried Mr. Ames, who, naturally generous and impulsive, was doubly stirred by Deborah's vehemence. "I will not have a man in the establishment who can be guilty of such an atrocity!"

But Deborah was just, and capable of looking at both sides of a question. Mr. Stokes had been cruel, but had perhaps acted only according to his light. If he were discharged his family might suffer. She interposed for him.

"He may have done only what he has been trained to do in other establishments, and supposed perhaps that he was consulting your interests. He would not repeat the act if forbidden. Besides, the affair now is to help the girl herself."

Mr. Ames called for Stokes. "Go to the nearest restaurant and order a hot dinner sent over for this Annie Keep that has been locked out. Buy also for her a gossamer and a pair of overshoes. Then step here, will you, and you and I will talk over this matter of discipline. You do not quite understand our methods, I think."

Stokes went out confounded. He had worked in factories for twenty years and had never seen a working-girl thus considered!

Deborah administered to Annie a hot dinner, dry foot-gear, and an exhortation against tardiness.

"I declare, Miss Grosvenor," said the girl, "I will try to be prompt and regular. I know we girls do make trouble by being late or staying away, and here we get better treatment than in most places where we work. Mr. Ames' kindness will do me more good than twenty lockings out."

"And what next?" asked Mr. Ames, when the shirt factory of Rendel Brothers rejoiced in a long, narrow, fairly well lighted room, with a stove at one end, a table to eat by, some small tables for games and books; a melodeon that was seldom silent at the noon-hour and contributed much to the general pleasure, especially when Deborah herself played on it; and a few simple appliances for gymnastic exercises. Deborah went to an evening class in gymnastics, held at the Young Women's Christian Association, and by zealous practice there was able to instruct her girls.

"What next?" asked Mr. Ames.

Deborah had grown bold with indulgence; people often do.

"A place for the girls in the evenings! Their homes or rooms are often crowded, noisy, hot in hot weather, cold in winter. They are weary and dull after a long day's work, they crave amusements like other people, and they wander about the streets. Then they fall into bad company sometimes, and usually stay out far too late, so that they do not get sleep enough. If the girls of reputable, Christian homes are not expected or allowed to run alone in the streets until ten or eleven o'clock, why should the working-girl be left to do it unchecked?"

"I'm sure I don't know why she should," said Mr. Ames.

"Let us have a room where we can give our girls singing-classes in the evening. I don't mean merely to have ladies dress up and sing at them, but some one who knows how to sing with them, plain simple songs, ballads, hymns, easy pleasant things, lullabies, and songs that shall rouse a love of nature. Let us teach them to march to music, so that they will learn better how to carry themselves and to be graceful. Who knows where some of these girls may come out? Fortune has strange changes in this country."

"And what else shall we do beside music and marching?"

"We might have lectures, lectures by men and by women, especially by women, who will tell them how and why to preserve health, what to eat, what to wear, what to do. Let them know why their skins need thorough washing and their clothes changing, and that graham bread is more nutritious than white, and eggs than meat, and bananas than candy. Let us have stereopticon talks, and show them the Polar Regions, the Heart of Africa, the Queens of England, the scenes of Puritan and Pilgrim life. Let us tell them the stories of the Bible, and make them acquainted with the heroes of the faith! And poetry, let them hear poetry too!"

"Miss Grosvenor, it is plain to be seen, even if—" and then Mr. Ames stopped suddenly. What was he about to say?

"How can we arrange such a room?" asked Mr. Ames.

"Can we not begin by using the largest machine-room for it? There is a chair for every machine."

"We will do something," said Mr. Ames. "I am deeply interested, and the firm desires to have a model establishment."

"There is a regalia factory on one side of you, and a paper-bag factory on the other. Why not induce them to join you?"

"Why the girls in the bag factory are a terrible crew! The employer there declares openly that so long as he gets plenty of work well done, he does not ask nor care how bad his girls are! It is an old saying, 'Like master like man,' and it is just as true of masters and factory girls. If they are expected to be good, and helped to be good, then it is very likely that they will be good."

"Mr. Ames is to have a room for evening gatherings, a social room," reported Deborah to Uncle Josiah; "and I suspect that I am exorbitant in my desires, for the more that is conceded the more I want, and the more miserable I feel about the daughters of the poor into whose family circle I have come by adoption."

"What now?" demanded Uncle Josiah.

"The moral condition of these my working sisters is influenced for evil, tremendously influenced, by the tenement-house system. How far their homes are from their work, and some shops are always open until late, and at some seasons of the year most shops and factories run late; and home the unprotected girls go, especially on Saturday night, alone. Then again, I find that rents being high and wages low, these poor families eke out an income by crowding men lodgers into their over-crowded homes. And then too from village and country the girls crowd into the city, a vast army, looking for work, and they have no homes, no guardians, no restraints; they suffer every conceivable misery, fail to find work, and are cast into long periods of idleness which they enter penniless, because their wages are only sufficient for the most exacting needs of the periods while they are earning them. Oh, uncle, it is the old cry—what shall we do for our sisters?"

"There are Homes and the Christian Associations."

"Yes, uncle, good, but insufficient. In some the board is five or six dollars a week. Five or six dollars for a girl without a dime! What is that old story of Tantalus, with the waters rising just below the lowest level of his thirsty lips? Others of these Homes will only receive lodgers and boarders, for two weeks, some for a month. At the end of that time they must go, whether or not they have secured work or home. What then? The time of being cast helpless on the streets is only set a little further off. Two weeks! one month! Did I get work so soon? Is work so easy to get?"

Then Deborah gave a little low laugh—she laughed more now than in Dives' days. "Do you know, Jean has the greatest influence over the girls at the shirt-factory? What do you think I did? Since we took on Bella and Martha and that pretty little dunce who wanted to tend a bar—my friends from the candy-factory—I persuaded Jean to hire two rooms and all four of them live together. Jean with her courage and knowledge of the world defends the others, and their company and her responsibility for them help to keep Jean from falling. I believe she is a Christian, but the chains of habit are so strong! and the hand of Christ is often held out through the human hand; his voice speaks in humanity!"

And now for a whole year Deborah Grosvenor reigned as forewoman in a shirt-factory finishing room. She learned much about shirt-finishing, much about herself, and a deal more about working women. She was so busy that she had no time to repine, and learning many things for the use of her girls, she improved much on her own part, while the gymnastics and other exercises entered upon for the sake of the girls made her much more active and vigorous then she had been when she fed on dainties and lay in down, and did nothing from morning until night but consider the preferences of Miss Grosvenor.

During all this time since she left the region of luxury and went down to live and work in the Lazarus Quarter, she had corresponded with some regularity with Miss Leila Stirling. At first she had shrunk from replying to Leila's warm letters. Then she began to relent a little before hearty human interests, and wrote more freely of her life, her experiences, her work, the ways and fortunes of working-girls. To all these revelations Leila lent a willing ear, and the two began to plan what might be some day, if ever they could work together for the Daughters of Lazarus.

When Deborah had been one year in the shirt-factory, she received from Leila news of the death of Mrs. Stirling. Deprived of the close companionship of years and of that demand for constant service which her invalid mother had made upon her, Leila felt as if she had neither place nor errand longer in this world. "What have I left?" she wrote to Deborah.

"You have your Lord's legacy left you, the poor," replied Deborah. "For this cause you may have come to the kingdom at such an hour as this. You have been bereft of all near relatives, but your fortune has been left you. I was bereft of fortune, and I have gone before you in the way of finding out the needs and sorrows of the poor. Now I can tell you what is needed: mine will be the work of suggesting, but how grand your mission, Leila, in performing! Come home and go to work."

The letter roused Leila Stirling. She came home with large plans and hopes, and her first proposal was that Deborah should live with her, share her fortune and work jointly with her. "You have had enough of hardship," she said.

"I have known nothing of real hardship," said Deborah, "because Nurse Agnes and Uncle Josiah have shielded me from it. If you knew the real lives of the working-girls, Leila, you would know what hardship is."

They were in Deborah's small hall room in Romaine Court. Deborah wore a dress of plain coarse woollen goods—a dress made by herself. Her shoes no longer cost eight dollars a pair;

not a bit of lace or jewelry was to be seen on Dives' disinherited daughter. Leila thought that this was poverty and hardship enough.

"You will not come and share with me?"

"No; your voice calls me, but I feel sure it is not God's voice."

Leila went away disappointed; her home looked so lonely. Why would not Deborah come to her? She left the city to go to her country home.

A bridge, a trestle giving way! a crash! and when helping hands came, there was laid by the roadside, in the moonlight, a limp and lonely form.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RETURN TO THE CLASSES.

"'O angel, why art so glad of face,
Who bring'st me nothing but pain and woe?'
The smile of the angel filled the place:
'Unto his chosen God bids me go.'"

A KNOCKING at midnight at the door of a house in Romaine Court. "Does Miss Grosvenor, Miss Deborah Grosvenor, live here?" Even in the darkness and the haste there was the touch of astonishment felt by the servant of Dives that a daughter of Dives had fallen so low! Yes, Miss Grosvenor lived there. "It is Miss Leila Stirling sends for her. I have the carriage at the entrance of the court. I thought maybe I could not turn. It is a railroad accident, and Miss Leila is hurt. She spoke first a few minutes after eleven and said Miss Grosvenor's name twice, so we came for her. Will she hurry, please?"

Yes, Deborah and Uncle Josiah made haste, and soon, along the paved streets and under the electric lights, rolled far from the purlieus of Romaine Court, back to the land of affluence. There was Leila lying, unconscious again, amid the splendors of her city home, where they had brought her; three doctors, her nurse, her maid, her housekeeper—crying, most of the women, for Leila was one to win liking; and then, very evidently, a good, easy, well-paid place was slipping from each of them as life slipped from their shattered mistress. There was not one of Leila's blood near her; not one endeared to her by the tie of kindred. Deborah took the limp white hands in hers and softly called Leila's name in her ear. At first there was no answering sign, but presently the chilly hands tightened a little about Deborah's fingers.

"Deborah," said Uncle Josiah, "God has called you here, and you must stay as long as he wills. This way lies your nearest duty."

"Yes: I cannot leave her, my Leila, my friend!" said Deborah, kneeling by the bed. For the moment the sight of Leila—this interior, so like the home of her own life until this short time past—carried Deborah away from all that had intervened since her father's death, and it seemed to her that she was as free to go and come as in her days of ease. Then the working woman reverted to the thought of her work. The factory! Her duties there! She led Uncle Josiah apart.

"Uncle, I cannot leave Leila, but how can I abandon my place, and leave all those girls to-morrow morning without a head? I have them in good training, but there will be anarchy there, sure. And the firm have been so good to me!"

"Cannot you designate some one to take your place? Jean?"

"Jean could not. She lacks a breeding that would give her authority. In fact, if she was suddenly elevated to be a forewoman the girls would try to play tricks upon her, and Jean would fight! I will tell you—Martha can take my place. She is a woman of intelligence and education; she has never associated much with the others. Tell Mr. Ames to give Martha my position; and tell Jean privately that I expect her to lead the girls in a strict attention to order. Tell Jean while this dear friend here lies dying, that she, my other friend, must not break my heart by any fall! And, uncle, look after Oliver."

"I will. You are already, in your love and cares, one of this large family of the poor. Christ also belonged to it."

Yes; following God's providence as the pointing of a divine index finger, Deborah had gone down among the world's workers to find work: following still the way chosen for her, and therefore chosen *by* her, she came back to the home of Dives. She had learned, in the words of the good old Saxon proverb, to "Doe ye nexte thynge," and found comfort in the thought that the child of God never walks with aimless feet. The great fruit of this lesson well learned is, that with undivided hearts we can address ourselves to the duty of the hour, giving all of ourselves to whatever we have to do.

Sitting in the subdued light of Leila Stirling's quiet room, and watching the thin white face, Deborah felt dawning over her soul a strong conviction that Leila ought to live, that her errand in this world was not done, that work still waited those hands. She went into the next room where one of the surgeons waited. "Doctor, will she live?"

"There is very little probability of it—not one chance in a hundred."

"And if she does live, if that one in the hundred is in her favor?"

"A cripple," the doctor replied, "who can never leave her couch. She had better die, poor lonely girl!"

"How do we know," said Deborah boldly, "what is best? One can glorify God in the fires. And if God is glorified and humanity is served, what is there to lament over? The longest life is not very long, and heaven will find reward for it all."

The doctor, a gray-headed man, rose and took her hand. "Is this Deborah Grosvenor, the

Deborah Grosvenor who used to say that she had no heart? who lived only for self, whose ears seemed unable to understand language that touched religion or the life beyond?"

"This," said Miss Grosvenor, "is Deborah, "somewhat made over in the fires of affliction."

"Then, my child, thank God for affliction. Gold is refined in the furnace, and silver is long tried by fire, and the fine pottery is made of well-trodden clay. Yet many of us are content to build up character out of untempered mortar! If you have grown better, less selfish, and so more Christlike, out of any trouble, thank God for it."

"I do," said Deborah. "But I came here to speak of Leila. I want her to live. She was just beginning really to live. She was planning to do good. I want her to carry out her plans. Even if she is a cripple on her couch, if she has a head to think and a heart to feel, and money to do her bidding, she can be happy and make the world happier. The shut-in ones are not idlers and wasted lives."

"Deborah," said the surgeon, "we will try and give her courage to live. You can hardly realize the power that that thing called spirit can exercise over that other thing called body. It can help stay the disintegration of disease, and turn back towards life the tides that have set towards death. Look at Leila: consider what her future may be. Have you courage to pray?"

"Yes," said Deborah; "I have always courage to pray, if I put in 'Thy will be done.'"

And so the days went on. At first Leila was scarcely conscious, and the battle was purely a physical one, urged in her behalf by scientific skill and tenderest care. During these days she only saw her nurses, physicians, and Deborah. Friends and acquaintances came to inquire for Miss Stirling, and Deborah, after a few days, went down to the drawing-room to see some of these. Uncle Josiah had sent her a trunk of clothing which she had not used in Romaine Court. Thus she re-appeared in the Stirling drawing-room, among the old-time acquaintances, as truly one of the upper class as ever.

"Why! This is never Deborah Grosvenor! How came you here?"

"I came to stay with Leila and help her to live."

"And where have you been for so long? Nearly two years! What an age! Have you been to Europe or on a trip around the world?"

"Neither. I have been here in the city all the time."

"Impossible! Where have you buried yourself? We heard that you had lost all your money. Of course that is not true."

"Yes, it is absolutely true, and I have been living in a place called Romaine Court, working for my living in a factory. My uncle has been with me, a city missionary."

"Eh? What is that? I thought missionaries only went to the heathen—to foreign folks."

"For that matter, there are plenty of foreign folks here in the city, and plenty of heathen, and a number of city missionaries, but not half enough. I should like to be one myself—only I did not know enough."

"Why, you had French and music and drawing and dancing, and no end of accomplishments; what on earth did you need to know more?"

"Something useful, and something about humanity. However, I am learning."

"And what are you learning?"

"How the other half of the world lives, what it needs, what it has, what it does not have, how it makes its living, and what can be done for it. I mean for the women other half."

"I don't understand a word that you are saying. You might as well be talking Greek to me."

"If you will come and live and work as I have for two years past, you will soon find out what I mean."

"What, really work in a factory among horrid grimy people! I should catch some disease, or get queer, or something."

"I have caught no disease, but I may be queer. And let me tell you, if Leila gets well, I mean by God's help to make her as queer as I am. Then there will be two of us to help our sisters who work for daily bread—Leila with money, I with work."

"I hope she will get well, poor dear! It seems so terrible to die, to drop out of life so suddenly! I wish people never had to die. Perhaps when I am real old I shall not be so horribly afraid of death as I am now. I wish I could lose that fear."

"Come down and live among the poor, and you'll lose it. I find people there more afraid of living than of dying. When life is only terror and pain I think people care less for it: but when one feels sure that heaven is a home, and that there is a Father and a Brother, and the glorious company of the saints of all ages, I think that the heart is drawn there, and all fear of dying is done away."

"Deborah Grosvenor! You are not the same at all! Of course with poor Leila lying up there as she is, and all that, it is natural that one should talk so. But I feel just as if I had been to a funeral! And yet you don't look as unhappy and discontented as you used to, Deborah. You always looked so bored!"

"Because I was so bored. Now I have been too busy to be bored. I have been doing my best to get shoes, also butter for my bread. I am very sorry, Grace, that I have made you feel like a funeral, for I am a much happier and more contented person than I used to be. If all of you girls that I used to know took up some really useful, helpful work, you would be happier. I do n't mean that you should go to the factory and earn shoes, as there is no need of that, but I mean that you might work, like more fortunate but loving and helpful sisters, for the girls that must work in factories and earn their shoes."

"You 'll get over all those crochets now that you have come back to live where you belong. As for those other girls, they are used to it, and I do n't believe they mind it; and if they do, it can't be helped; the subject is too big. I 'm afraid, Deborah, you are running into communism or socialism, or something like that. Do n't have a fad of that kind, I beg of you, it is such bad form. If you must have a hobby, it should be dogs—pugs, for instance—or orchids, or perhaps china collecting."

"Go and spin," laughed Deborah. "If our grandmothers' wheels had not gone out of date, some of us would have been more sensible. We respect what we earn, because we know the worth of it in work and weariness, in what we call 'hard knocks.' I never appreciated luxury or money of my father's earning, because I never knew what it meant in thought and toil. I have found many of the working women superior to myself and some of my old acquaintances, because they know more, are more useful and more self-sacrificing."

"If I was n't so afraid of being insulted or catching something, I would go down there with you and see some of them."

"You would not be insulted, nor catch anything. I hope to take you and many more 'down there' some time, to be helpful."

After a time, as Leila grew better, Deborah narrated such conversations to her, a little at a time, to divert her thoughts.

"I had hoped to do something," said Leila, "but now it is ended."

"Not ended perhaps, but to be begun, and carried on far better than ever," said Deborah hopefully. "Take courage to live, and God will give you work. Let me read you a strong sweet lesson which you can ponder as you lie here. 'Make your burdens as light as possible, not by ignoring them, but by putting the sunshine of love and resignation into them. Bear them in the Spirit of Christ. Carry them in the strength of the Lord. See in them a gracious purpose. Make the best of them. Be neither soured nor dwarfed by them, but rise superior to them, manifesting continually that they are your servants, not your masters. Whatever their number or peculiarity, so bring the grace of God into them that the issue shall be the chastened temper, the bright buoyant soul, the mellowed character, and the sweet attractive life.' "

"What did you mean by it, Deborah?" asked Leila, several hours after. "I have kept the ideas, though I lost the words. What did you mean by it for me?"

"Beloved," said Deborah tenderly, "I meant that you should desire to live, and be a co-worker with God in your return to life, willing now to grow a little stronger and better daily, and by-and-by willing to look for and accept the work that God shall give for head, hands, and purse, even if the feet are held in the strong chains of weakness."

Day by day, week by week, even month by month—such was the slow progress of Leila Stirling towards even so much of health as would bring her power to see her friends, to talk with them, to be propped up half erect upon her couch, to think and will and decide for herself. During all this time Deborah stayed with her, hourly at her side. She administered the household in Leila's place, attended to her business, received her friends, was the link between her and the outer world, and, once more surrounded by luxury, waited on by servants, knowing no lack, she seemed to have left the portion of the poor toiler and returned finally to the house of Dives. But in her heart Deborah was not severed from the comradeship which she had chosen in the ranks of working women.

Uncle Josiah and Nurse Agnes came to see her, and she went to see them. Sometimes she went in Leila Stirling's carriage. Then great was the excitement in Romaine Court at the elegant barouche, the high-stepping matched horses, with gold-mounted harness, and the coachman and footman in livery, while "their young lady" was seated on the soft cushions.

"I knew you would go from us," sighed Mrs. Werner. "It is right; it is good. You belongs up there. Here is not good enough for you."

"It is good enough for me, and I am coming back as soon as my sick friend can be left," said Deborah stoutly. "I belong here, and I shall live here."

On these occasions Deborah was reckless; she carried oranges, grapes, bananas, boxes of candy, and distributed them to the disinherited children around Romaine Court. She took, as Leila's bounty to the Day Nursery, toys and picture-books and hammocks. She took a soft-cushioned chair to Bella's little lame sister. She explained that her sick friend sent the gifts, but all the same the people believed that they came from her.

"You care for us; you know us; your friend does not know us and does not care; one must know to care."

It was the old story. He who came to save men was made in fashion as a man. One must somehow know to care. How should Leila Stirling learn to know?

"She is learning," said Uncle Josiah, "by the discipline of her sufferings. She is set apart from her former life, and is consecrated by pain to ministry to those who mourn."

"Is it worth all this?" asked Leila, when Deborah told her. Those wakeful nights, those long days of heart-ache, were so hard.

"Be of good courage," said Deborah; "it is worth it all. It will seem to you to be more and more worth it as eternity goes on. When the harvest is gathered we shall see it was well worth while to sow seed even in cold or heat, in toil and rain."

One evening Uncle Josiah, when he called, told Deborah that some of her working-girl friends had been to see her, and had been driven away by Leila's supercilious servants, and were greatly grieved and angered. "They were fools," they said, "to believe that the young lady would see them, or let poor people into her fine new quarters." This hurt Deborah sharply.

"Make them understand that I knew nothing of it," she said, "and that they are to come back, and shall surely come in. If they are not admitted I will not stay here."

But Leila gave positive orders that all who called for Miss Grosvenor were to be admitted, taken to the drawing-room, and treated with courtesy. Moved probably by curiosity, they came again, eight of them together, headed by Jean and Bella, soon after night-fall, and Deborah found them drawn into an embarrassed group in the splendors of the electric-lighted drawing-room. She went to them holding out both hands in simple friendly fashion.

"My dear girls! I am so glad to see you! You must spend the evening with me. Come with me and take off your hats and capes."

"Mebbe other folks are coming, and we 'll be in your way," said Bella, finding Deborah very impressive in her trained cashmere tea-gown, with all these gorgeous things about her.

"No one is coming, and I am ever so glad to see you all," said Deborah, and when their hats were laid by, they made a half-circle around the glowing fire in the large grate and the talk began about the work-room.

"How do you get on?"

"We want you back!" cried Jean. "Nobody seems to have the care for us that you do. No one manages us as well as you do. You are not going to stay away for ever, are you?"

"No; just as soon as my friend is able to be left, I shall leave her and go back to you."

"It is awfully good of you to come to us, and share our work and our ways, if you do n't have to, and might live among all this gorgeousness," said Martha. "But we want you to come. No one advises us as you do, no one sees just when one is going wrong, and stops us in time, as you do. No one thinks of the wet feet, the sore throats, and favors the weak eyes as you do."

"When you were there something new was invented for us every week; nothing is invented now, but the old things keep up."

"It is good that things keep up, and by-and-by we will have something new invented by the joint genius of us all," said Deborah.

Then after all was talked over, and the absent girls asked after, Deborah played for them on the grand piano, showed them the portfolios of engravings and told them the meanings of many of them, took them into the little conservatory and cut flowers to make a button-hole bouquet for each girl, and then had refreshments of jelly, pickles, sandwiches, and chocolate, served in the dining-room. She had no hesitation in rifling the conservatory or in ordering refreshments; she was giving herself to Leila and taking away herself from these girls, and it was but right that Leila's abundance should give them some measure of compensation. It was ten o'clock before they reluctantly turned towards their homes.

"Come again, and bring the others," said Deborah. "By-and-by Miss Stirling will be able to be carried here to the sofa and see you all. She is as much interested in my friends as I am."

"She cannot be like *you*," said Bella; "you are one of us; you have lived and worked with us. Yes, we will come again; this evening has been like a piece of heaven."

CHAPTER XV.

YEARNING FOR THE MASSES.

"And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh—'I have found
A new land, but I die.'"

"I WANT to know all those girls," said Leila to Deborah, when she had been told about the company that had been entertained at her house. "Let us have some of them here often, once a month or once a fortnight. It will be a rest and pleasure to them, and will help them upward in manners and health and higher aims. Then too, Deborah, you know my house in the country; it is a lovely place, and after this, as I shall never be able to move or travel very far, we will stay there for six months each year, going the first of May, and we will invite five or six of these working-girls, or women, for three weeks at a time, and so keep up the succession for all the time we are there. We can give nearly fifty a nice country holiday each year. Will not that be delightful?"

"Very delightful, dear. I hope you will do it."

"Say *we* will do it," urged Leila. "You and I will always be partners, like twin sisters, only you will be strong and wise and enterprising, while I am weak, and follow where you lead. Half of all that I have is yours, dear Deborah; let us live united."

Still the shadow remained on Deborah's face. Lelia was not yet well enough to be left; but when the day should come that others could do for her what Deborah did, Deborah felt that then she must return to the place and work where she believed that God had called her. Leila detected this hesitation.

"Speak, Deborah," she said, with the hastiness of the invalid.

"I will be with you for a time, dear."

"For always," insisted Leila. "What do you mean by hesitating? If your own fortune had been left you still, would you refuse to use it, and go and live in Romaine Court and work in the factory? Would you?"

"I should never have known the need there is down there."

"Well, suppose somehow your fortune came back—your own: would you refuse it? Would n't you use it?"

"Yes; as well as God should give me grace. But if it were in me still to be a selfish idler, I hope God would keep me poor! Leila, understand me. If I had now, with the views I now have, my own former fortune, I hope I should consider myself God's trustee for it, and feel that I had no right to divest myself of it, because he had appointed me to use it for Him. I should obey him in holding and administering it, as I now try to obey him in going without it. But taking half of your fortune, and leaving the ranks into which God ordered me, is a very different thing from using what he put into my hands. You can keep all your property and use it rightly for God and humanity. I can give myself. If I were feeble and helpless, and could do nothing for myself or others, I should feel that this offer of yours was God's way of caring for me. As it is, I only regard it as a test or trial of my willingness to work His will in my new sphere."

"But, oh, Deborah, what will *you* do, what will *I* do?"

"For me, I will, after you are a little stronger, go back to my girls and my work. I will come to see you every evening or nearly every evening, and we will talk over all that comes into my experience, and we will plan what to do, and by degrees I will make you as well acquainted with the people as I shall be: and then what splendid work you can do! These evening visits and the country holidays are good, very good; but to the greater, wider, more useful work which we shall build up, such things will only be a little bind ing or braid to the whole garment. The Rendel Brothers are trying to start and keep up a business on liberal, helpful principles. They will surely bring other large employers to fall into line with them. Who knows but that you, through your business agent, may start or buy out some large business, and conduct it also on liberal and gospel principles; and so the work will widen and commend itself, and spread in our city, and become known in other cities, and other hearts may be moved to serve God in blessing his poor and hold property as for Him. Who knows how far the work may go? The labor of working women may be revolutionized."

"Oh, Deborah, if I were strong and well to work as you can, I should have something of this great hope that you have! But, just as I was waking up to bear fruit for others, this strange blight or winter has fallen over my life and withered me away!"

"Aaron's rod blossomed when all Israel thought it but a long-dead stick. The trees seem dead, and yet awake after the winter full of buds. Remember what is said:

'He reached the glory of a hand
That seemed to touch it into leaf,
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.'

So God's hand can touch you and make this shut-in waiting life your richest life. 'More are the children of the desolate'—remember that."

"Yes, I do, and at times I feel resigned. Then again I feel as if I could not endure my lot. I question why I was not left as I was before; why I did not die outright, rather than be left half alive in this way."

"My dear, your heart and head are not half, but all alive. Live in them. They are the real potencies. Christ can work in you that absolute submission which he had to the Father's will.

> 'Thou seemest human and divine,
> The highest, holiest manhood thou;
> Our wills are ours, we know not how—
> Our wills are ours to make them thine.'"

"While you are here to help me I remember all this, and it is easy; when you are gone what shall I do? Deborah! it seems as if one as afflicted and helpless as I am had the first best claim on you. Is it right to leave me?"

"Yes. You have money, that potent conjuring-rod of the nineteenth century. That can command for you all comfort that science can bring to your state, all the service and help that civilization can afford. There are women who are hounded on to heavy, bitter work by poverty, who work with failing eyes and laboring chests and aching, distorted spines; who work and suffer till they can toil no more, and drop into the almshouse, a hospital, or the potter's-field. Your money, Leila, can bring you some one to take all of my place that shall be vacant. You can find some gentle, loving, gracious, skilful woman, who will be companion and friend to you, while I shall be your helper and agent in work. There are no doubt to be found ministers' widows or daughters, or girls suddenly impoverished as I was, who need you, and whom you will find just what you need. In securing such a one you open one more avenue in life for some self-supporting woman. You will get a new friend, will widen out your sympathies just that much, while I am doing the other work that I am perfectly well able to do. I wish you knew how many working-girls there are who work with not half the help or the physical ability that I have, while they are borne down with the sufferings and cares of sick parents or feeble little children, and I am grieved for no one near in kindred. Strange, is it not, Leila, that there are lives so hard that it is better to be deprived of sweetest ties rather than to see dear ones share our pain?"

Deborah had a fancy for standing behind the curtains and watching the streets when the lamps were first lighted. For two or three evenings she had seen the same form of a nearly grown lad loitering near Miss Stirling's home, going and coming, and looking towards the windows. Suddenly something struck her as familiar in the gait and the shape of the shoulders. Running down stairs and out upon the steps, she called,

"Oliver! Oliver! is that you?"

"Yes, miss," said Oliver coming up, half pleased and half abashed.

"Well, why did n't you ring and come in? I 'm sure you want to see me."

"Yes, miss; but I dare n't take the liberty."

"However, I want to see you, so come in. Here, hang up your hat on this rack. Did you rub your feet on the mat? That is a good fellow; now come in and tell me how you have been getting on."

Oliver looked uneasily about the drawing-room and at the plush-cushioned chair to which he was pointed. "It 's too good for me, miss," he said, casting a glance at his clothes.

"Nothing is too good for a man who is trying to behave himself. Do n't you think when you get to heaven, Oliver, things will be finer than in this room?"

"Ay, miss; but I 'll be changed over and made fit."

"You 'll have left these working-clothes behind you certainly," said Deborah, smiling, "but now the change, the fitting you for heaven, is going on, and I want you to remember, Oliver, that an honest working-man, who fears God and keeps his life clean, is good enough to go frankly and simply anywhere that it comes into his way to go."

"Thank you, miss," said Oliver, straightening himself.

"Have n't you been about here two or three evenings?"

"Five or six," said Oliver; "our night-school teacher is sick and we have the week; and I thought maybe I 'd get a look at you, and it would do me good, and brace me up to keep out of mischief."

"Oliver, where have you to go evenings when there is no school and it is not warm weather fit for our house-top?"

"Nowhere, miss, except at our home; and mother and aunt and the little ones are there, and a lot of neighbor women, with each one a baby maybe; and I 'm in the way, like, and it is dull and crowded. Sometimes I drop in to see Jean and the girls with her, but they have their own talk going on, and I 'm only a boy. I promised you I 'd keep out of saloons, and if I stand about the street corners I 'm kind of sick of the talk and stories the men have there. Since you taught me a bit I do n't like such ways."

"Do you like to read?"

"I'm getting to like it. But I have n't books, and I do n't know what to pick up. My teacher says not to touch the bad ones."

"Wait here a minute," said Deborah, her face shining with a happy thought. She went up stairs and after a few moments came down.

"Here, Oliver, Miss Stirling says to take this envelope to the Young Men's Christian Association to-morrow, and it will make you a member, and give you the freedom of the reading-room, the gymnasium, lectures, all the good things they have there! Now you'll have a place for evenings! Practise in the gymnasium; it will straighten you and give you better health. Oliver, how would you like to own a home like this some day?"

"There's most too much in it," said Oliver cautiously.

Deborah looked about. "I believe it is overcrowded with small articles of useless luxury. But after all, Oliver, people earn a living by making and selling those things. You would like to own a home full of comforts, where you could be happy and make other people happy?"

The time had come to arouse ambition in this boy—to give him an object in life. His glowing face responded to the conjuration. "Indeed I would, miss!"

"Work hard, then, with an end in view,"

said Deborah. "Ask God to to be your helper in all that you do, and who knows how high and noble a place you may gain!"

As daily Deborah was thinking of returning to the factory work, daily the need of the girls pressed upon her heart, and finally she said to Leila one evening, "To-morrow I am going back, for the day, to my room at the shirt factory, to see if I am needed there as much as I fancy that I am. I have promised the firm to go back."

"I hope you 'll find that they are better off without you than with you," said Leila; "then you will be ready to stay with me."

"People sometimes greatly overestimate their importance, and perhaps I do mine," said Deborah, laughing.

So next morning, while most of the Stirling household slept, Deborah rose, put on her working dress, which she had worn when she took that night ride to Leila's home, ate her breakfast alone in the butler's pantry, and at seven o'clock appeared in the shirt-finishing room. All was at once uproar. The girls scorned work hours, and crowded about her, anxious to touch her, to speak to her, to look into her smiling eyes, and to hear the full, cheery tones of her voice. She brought new life into the finishing-room.

"Look here, girls!" cried Deborah, rapping on the table with a yard-stick; "this will never do! Who is robbing the firm now? I am still forewoman of this room! Get to work, every one of you! Nora Lacy, are your eyes better, that you sit in that dark corner? Move out here into the light. Mary Reed, your shoes are sopping wet. Take them off and put them near the heater, and go and rub your feet well in the dressing-room. I believe I will order twenty pairs of slippers for the use of you girls that come here with soaking feet."

"In that case none of them will be careful, and all will come wet," remarked Mrs. Brand.

The work went on, but Deborah noticed that the girls were dull, and some trouble seemed brooding among them. "What is the matter with you? You have something on your minds. Speak out," cried Deborah after a while.

The girls looked embarrassed. Some opened their lips to speak, changed their minds and were silent—the machines hummed on. Mrs. Brand was doing hand-work. She turned to Deborah. "Miss Grosvenor, it's the striking agents. The shirt-makers are all talking of a strike. They say penitentiary competition puts labor wages too low, and there's a movement for a strike, and the promoters of the strike are about among our girls. Do n't they know that women can't strike? The men are organized, and have funds ready to help those that hold out; and the men have tougher hearts, and will hold out in the face of the starving wives and the crying children. Women a' n't made like that; they can't see the old parents getting lean and faint with hunger, or the babies wailing for bread. They are not the fighting kind mostly, and they take what they can get. They may fret a bit, and cry, when they have time to cry, but they put up with things for the sake of others, as men do n't do. It is no use, Miss Grosvenor, for 'em to try striking; they a' n't organized, and they 'll be starved back to even lower wages and harder work."

"But see here," said Deborah, "are not Rendel Brothers doing the very best that they can for you all, in every way? Do they not give you comforts that no other firm affords, and wages above the average? Now why incommode them with a strike just because the employés of other firms strike? That is a poor reward of merit in employers. At that rate it will not pay to do well by you."

"You see they claim that Rendel Brothers could give higher yet, if the strike forced the other shirt-makers to pay better, and pushed out the penitentiary competition."

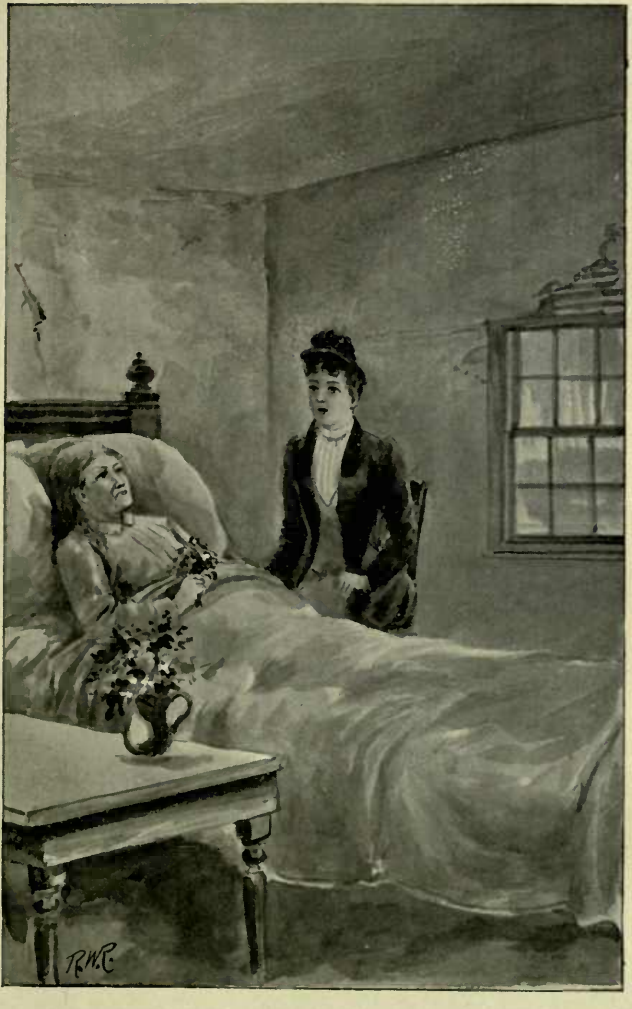
"Are not the women in the penitentiary

badly enough off, without your trying to deprive them of labor? Imprisonment with nothing to do would be twice as long and hard as with time occupied. Why begrudge them the chance to learn an honest trade, so that when they come out of prison they can support themselves? Why wish to take away a clean, easy trade, and drive them only into the roughest and hardest? Finally, if they are not allowed to make shirts, what can they make? Any trade might be open to the same objection. Come, be generous, be womanly, liberal to liberal employers and to sister-women. Many of you say your lot is hard, wages low, toil long, because richer women do not sympathize with you, help you, think for you, and because they want their made goods at the very lowest figures, leaving no room for fair pay for your work. Now if these richer women do bear hard on you, why do you bear hard on the unfortunate women in the penitentiary?"

"You see there are some folks whom nothing pleases," cried Martha, "because they don't want to be pleased, and they are not even pleased with being displeased. You find present working arrangements very unsatisfactory. So they are, very. But you'd find the strike equally unsatisfactory, and work, when you returned to it, more unsatisfactory still; while as far as all of us in this house are concerned, I do think we owe Rendel Brothers some loyalty in return for their liberal and sympathetic treatment of us."

"So we do!" cried one of the girls, "and for my part I am glad to have strike worry off my mind."

"Now, see here," said Deborah; "you spread it through the building, and among other working-girls, as many as can get in our biggest room, that beginning with next Monday evening we are to have a course of—well, something between talks and entertainments here, Monday and Friday evenings. I shall give the first one, perhaps all of them, and they will be about how women in other parts of the world live. I shall begin with China; and I shall have Nell Ball, who is little and dark, and somewhat Chinese-looking, dressed up as a Chinese poor woman, and Betty Mills dressed up as a Chinese lady; and I shall have some Chinese women's work here, and the stage dressed up with fans and parasols, and I will tell you how Chinese women eat, dress, sleep, work, marry, and die. I will show you what they use for knives and forks, and how they tie up their feet, and show you pictures of their homes and their babies. After we do up China, one evening, we will try India, then Siam, Africa, Turkey, Persia, and so



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on. I think, on the whole, when we find out how much worse off other women are, we shall be more contented with our own fate."

After work hours Deborah went home to tea with Nurse Agnes and Uncle Josiah. "It is well you are come," said Uncle Josiah; "old Mrs. Jensen is sick; she is failing fast, and she is anxious to see you. She wants you to sing for her. I meant to go for you this evening."

Away, then, after tea, went Deborah to Mrs. Jensen's attic. The old dame lay peacefully in her clean, white bed: her room was neat and cheerful, her young attendant waited upon her as a daughter. Deborah sat by her and sang "My ain countree." How eager were the faded old eyes, long lighted by the fires of sin, but now full of love and waiting grace. The withered old hand kept time to the words

"I 've his gude word of promise that some gladsome day the
King
To his ain royal palace his banished hame will bring;
Wi' e'en an' wi' hearts running owre we shall see
The King in his beauty in our ain countree.

"My sins hae been mony, and my sorrows hae been sair,
But there they 'll never vex me, nor be remembered mair;
His bluid hath made me white, His han' shall dry my e'e,
When He brings me hame at last to my ain countree."

"Yes, miss," said the old woman, when Deborah's song had ended, "it is only Christ that could do that for me—make *me* white and clean. Oh, if you knew how wicked I have been!"

"Thy sins shall be remembered no more for ever," said Deborah. "In Christ there is such complete forgiveness that our sins are not only forgiven, but forgotten. The sin of his people is the one thing that God can forget."

And so, after a busy day, back went Deborah to Leila. "Were you really needed down there?" asked Leila.

"So much needed that I hardly dared to come back; I felt as if I were forsaking God's errands. I stopped a strike, and devised something new for the girls, and comforted a soul in the Border Land. How mean all that sounds—as if no one else could or would do what I did! But the errands were the ones God gave to me, and as he sent no other about them, if I had not done them they might have lain undone."

"What new thing did you devise?" asked Leila.

"It came to me like an inspiration. It is something you can help me in. I remembered your Chinese pictures and curiosities; and the ladies of the Third Church have Chinese costumes to rent, and I knew, Leila, you would provide Chinese lanterns, fans, parasols, napkins, and such little things, so that each girl could have a memento to take home, to brighten up her own place and keep the talk in her mind." And then Deborah told her about the course of talks on

"HOW OTHER WOMEN LIVE."

"How grand you are since you became poor, Deborah!" cried Leila. "Never be rich any more, unless you can stay poor in spirit."

"Amen to that," said Deborah.

CHAPTER XVI.

TRUE YOKE-FELLOWS.

> "Which did accomplish their desire,
> Bore and forebore, and did not tire—
> Like Stephen, an unquenchéd fire."

ONE of the wonderful traits of humanity is the readiness with which it adjusts itself to the inevitable. An onlooker from, let us say, some distant star, inhabited by happy immortals, might conclude that a race standing always but one remove from sickness, death, and all forms of sorrow would be ever despairingly bewailing its losses. But how seldom do we hear a protest lifted against these our precarious conditions! The bridegroom receives his bride, and is joyful, although at the very altar the words "till death do us part" sound the knell of a long hope; the mother clasps her babe, and her smile is unshadowed by the thought of the thousands of little coffins that are yearly carried across the thresholds. When the sorrow comes, the shadow falls, the buoyancy of the human race rises up to readjust environment, and time itself brings balm to pain.

When Leila Stirling learned that her strong helpful friend must leave her, she felt at first as if she could not endure the thought; but, presently growing accustomed to it, she took the deepest interest in planning for Deborah's work on her return to "the masses."

When Deborah had found for Leila a companion who could read to her, write for her when her own easily tired hands found their task too great, be with her in her waking hours and not very far off when she slept, then she made ready to return to Romaine Court. Leila's maid had been the attendant of years, her housekeeper had been trusted by her mother. "No one could be better situated to administer life from a couch than you are," said Deborah. "Now I will superintend your removal to the country, help you receive your first six guests, stay a week, and then will leave you to manage for yourself. I will come up Saturday evenings and stay until Monday mornings, for a few weeks, not only to see you, but to look after your guests. It would be only in human nature that you should find some of them intolerable and encroaching. Very likely there are some of the girls who would prefer hanging over the back gate and talking with your men servants to any amount of amusement you could afford to them in your library or garden. In view of such developments of human nature, we will ask the girls for no fixed time, and if one of them chances to be an unendurable guest, we can quietly give her a return ticket. Still I think all will go well, for I shall only suggest to you girls whom I know pretty thoroughly, and who are nice and respectable. Some day you and I may arrange a country or sea-side place, better suited than your house to the rougher sort. The mere fact of poverty does not make one a saint, and I have known plenty of women lately who could turn the pleasantest home you could give them into Pandemonium."

"Well, we must not expect too much," said Leila; "all will not go with perfect smoothness; we must take folks as we find them. Story books are given to painting all protégés as angels, but I do n't see how very many angels could be produced, in such circumstances as you picture to me, in the homes of our poor. It is *homes* that we want, Deborah. Oh if we could regenerate the homes, we should strike at the root of these troubles! When you tell me how the children and girls of the poor live, and I contrast it with the way I was brought up and taught and cared for, I feel such a pity that I am nearly heart-broken."

"If we would remodel the homes, we must

produce good mothers to administer them; and when from childhood women are brought up without education, in crowded rooms which preclude decency or cleanliness; when they must be all the time at hard work, and have almost none of the appliances of home comfort; when mothers must leave their children to the streets, or to the care of other children, for ten hours in the day, how can we expect to create good mothers? They are wonderfully good for their opportunities."

"Dear me, I wish we could gather up all the little children!"

"Then half the world would be a big orphanage; and the family, not the orphanage, is the divine ideal."

Deborah was at last back in Romaine Court, taking up life as it was when she left it. Uncle Josiah watched her closely to see if she had regrets, longings for the luxury she had left; but the old selfish Deborah had passed away; not regrets, but a high purpose to do what good she could, filled Deborah's mind.

"Who'd ha' thought it!" cried Romaine Court. "Our young lady has been riding in her coach and living like lords, and here she comes back to us just as easy!"

"When you see and admire that," said Uncle Josiah, "think of the example she is following.

Our Lord left the throne of the universe, the glory of heaven, the sinless company of the angels, and came to live on earth, poor, homeless, weary, persecuted, crucified. Foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head."

Thus Deborah, as an object lesson, brought home to some hearts the condescension and love of Christ as otherwise they would never have seen it. Happy is that Christian who is able in any way to serve as an object lesson of the work of his blessed Lord!

One Saturday evening the happy, courageous face of Deborah appeared at the door of the little boudoir where Leila Stirling lay on her couch. The windows were open to the soft air, and the lace curtains drifted to and fro, while through them glowed the clusters of the roses that climbed over the porch. At the foot of Leila's couch sat one of her guests, a button-hole maker, not making button-holes now, but reading aloud from Jean Ingelow's poems, while Miss Lacy, Leila's companion, played a game of croquet on the lawn with three others of the guests; and in a grassy enclosure, seen through the trees, the remaining two guests were taking riding lessons, one riding, the other leading, or criticising, a meek old family horse, that at twenty years of age had retired upon a competence to close his days in peace in the Stirling pastures. It was a scene of good cheer which filled Deborah with a thankful joy.

How the pale thin face of the little buttonhole maker had taken roundness and color! With what strength and courage could she pick up that crutch lying at her feet and go forth into the world again!

"Why are there so many more crippled and deformed among these girls than in our class?" Leila had asked Deborah, and Deborah had answered, "I always wonder how there are so many healthy, well-made, handsome ones among those whose infancy passes in so much neglect, among so many perils. Our girls are shielded from all dangers, nursed, cared for; these others must live by day on the curbstones, and crawl up and down stairs, while their mothers toil with scrubbing-brush or at the wash-tub or are absent all day in a rag-picking establishment or umbrella-factory or type-foundry or some other busy place."

"How horrible that 'rag-picking establishment' sounds!" said Leila; "what disease and dirt must infest those rags!"

"How many occupations are there for women?" she asked presently.

"Uncle Josiah and I counted three hundred the other night; but that is not nearly all; and those were occupations of hands. There are occupations requiring head-work, such as stenography, typewriting, book-keeping, teaching, and kindred employments."

On this evening, when Deborah, fresh from the city, found Leila's household so happily engaged, she went and knelt down by the couch and took her friend's hand. "I know you have waited supper for me."

"Yes, indeed; and I know you are hungry after your trip."

"But before supper let me show you a present I have brought you."

She stepped into the hall and came back with a large basket, lightly covered. She placed it near Leila's couch, removed the covering, and there lay a little black-haired, red-faced baby, contentedly sucking its thumb!

"Why, Deborah!"

"The baby is three weeks old," said Deborah; "a girl, named Linda, after a good little mother who has died at her post. Her husband, this baby's father, worked in a compressed-yeast factory, and was killed by an accident in the elevator. The baby's mother worked on children's calico dresses. What did she get? Fifty cents a dozen. She could not make a dozen a day. She had a child two years old; for it and herself she worked until a week before this little one was born, when the other child died of measles. There was no room for the poor woman in the Maternity Hospital. After this baby was born the mother had no proper care, and began work too soon. She died. There are martyrs in the nineteenth century. Uncle Josiah found her, a few days before she died, and promised her that the baby should be cared for. The parents were decent, good people. Will you have her? It seemed to me just what your home needed, a little child to grow up in it! You will enjoy seeing her learn to walk, to talk; you will be happier in sharing her baby plays and admiring her cunning baby tricks. Will you have her, Leila? If not, I can take her back."

"Put her beside me," said Leila eagerly. "Let me see her little hands and feet. What color are her eyes? I hope her hair will stay curly! Yes, I will keep her; but, Deborah, who will take care of her? I 'll need a nurse for her. None of us know about babies here."

"I brought along a nurse, a nice girl who has been trained two years in the Day Nursery. They let me have her, and took a new maid there. Shall I call her in? Come, Mattie."

Mattie came in, a broad smile on her face. What joy and glory to be nurse-maid here in this beautiful home! What a lawn, what a garden! Why, there was a fountain, and also a pond where a pair of swans floated slowly! Mattie felt that she had reached a great promotion.

"Now," said Deborah to Leila, "you can enjoy yourself thinking what room you will take for the nursery; and then you can get the catalogues from the furniture stores and pick out a crib and a baby carriage; and then you can select a baby's outfit; and you must subscribe for some magazine that will instruct you in baby nursing, and read it, and make Mattie read it, so that this little maid shall be brought up in the most approved methods. Why, you will feel like the mother of a family at once, Leila!"

Leila laughed—a clear, happy laugh—and hugged the baby to her bosom. "I 'll teach her to call me mamma?"

"Why not?" said Deborah; "the true mother is the one who rears the child with maternal care. But, Leila, do n't let her grow up ignorant of the poor faithful little mother that she was named after. I saw her in her coffin, and in my heart I promised her the love of her child."

When the August guests were dismissed Deborah said, "I have a terrible proposal to make to you, Leila. I want you to take an old lady. That is not such a bad proposition, for she is a nice, neat, amiable old creature, and I know you will enjoy talking with her and hearing her experiences. She will be your house company. But I also want you to take a mother and four children! Four boys, from one to nine years old! The mother is feeble and a month here may do much for her; the children have all been through a siege of measles and whooping-cough and are in a wretched state. I do n't ask you to take them into the house here, but there are two rooms above the carriage-house that could be fixed up with beds, a washstand and some clothes-hooks, some chairs and window-curtains, and do admirably for them. Then, as they should be out of doors all the time, I propose that when it is not stormy they should take their meals on some stationary table that your men can fix up under the big elm beside the carriage-house. There is a hydrant in the carriage-house; have a big tub set there for them to take their nightly baths. When it storms they can eat at the table in their room. The mother can set her table and wash her dishes, and can wash in your laundry for her children after your laundry work is done. If your cook will prepare plenty of plain food, the little boys can take it from the kitchen to their mother. They can play in the grove back of the carriage-house, and have a swing and a see-saw there; and there is the little brook running through the grove where they can build dams and fish and sail boats. I have thought it all out. May they come? You will never hear or see them except as you wish to, on show occasions, when they are on their good behavior. I am so anxious for them! May they come?"

"Yes, indeed. Fix it as you choose. Where did you find them? What work does the mother do? Where is the father?"

"The father and mother both work in a mattress factory. The father has long been disabled with an injured hand, but is now well. If the family have this summer rest and care the father can get ahead a little again. They are badly off for clothing. I heard of them through a Bible woman whom I know. Uncle Josiah meets most of the city Bible women."

"Tell them to come as soon as you like, and if the plan works well, we will keep them six weeks. I will give you fifteen dollars to get the children and the mother some clothes. I suppose the boys can run barefoot, but should have shirt-waists and trowsers and hats."

"Just see how wise you are becoming," laughed Deborah.

"I have nothing to do but to think," said Leila, "and I am reading all the books that I can find on the Labor Problem and the state of the poor. I have waded through the reports of the 'Commissioner of Labor,' and through essays, and found no little help in many novels, especially Besant's. If Besant, with his knowledge and large-heartedness, had only the element of a strong, warm Christianity in his works, how good and helpful they would be! I am sure, Deborah, that it is Christianity that must solve these questions at the last. The brotherly love, the practical fellowship, set forth by Christ must do the work to-day."

"And are you not happy, Leila, useful and happy, lying here in what you once thought would be hopeless imprisonment?"

"Indeed I am. It was a true word you said, Deborah, that where head and heart were free to work, work could be done."

"And I am your hands and your feet," said Deborah.

"And how about the evening talks on the women of other lands? Are they well attended and useful?"

"They are so. They make the girls more contented, and they are educative and enlarge their thoughts. I began on China because you could furnish things for that. Then I took Japan, and a gentleman who has a store of Japanese goods lent Uncle Josiah a nice lot of things for that talk. Then we found one of the city churches that could provide us help and information about Siam, and I read copiously from books on that country. And so it has gone on. I seldom could see more than one lecture ahead, but God opened the way. A Turkish dealer and an artist came and gave me the talk on Turkey, and one of the Rendel firm did the Polynesian Islands, and had a splendid show of curiosities. Then I struck another good idea: I have a Swede girl, and a Norwegian, very intelligent, and a young Hollander; and I got them to tell us about life in their countries. I had them come in their national dress, such as they wore when they came to this country, and I called them up on the little platform with me, and asked them questions, and had the girls in the audience ask them questions; and soon they began to talk freely, and told us all about marriages and funerals, Christmas holidays, and pecuilar customs or phases of domestic life. You have no idea how nice it was, and they told how the women did field work, and were stone-cutters and brick-layers and railroad employées, and how in Holland they often towed the canal boats, and in some countries were even harnessed to a plough! Our girls thought they lived in a pretty good land after all."

"Dear me! I wish I could go to one of those talks," sighed Leila.

"Next winter I shall arrange talks on other themes. I will have one on Botany, and you can fill the platform with flowers from your conservatory and growing plants, so that the talk can be simple and general, about the food, drink, sleep, growth, uses, and so on of plants. I could get one of the High-school teachers to come and give that. I see clearly that we must arrange for another room. The one we use is too small. I want all to come that will, for the talks help to educate and refine these girls, give them nice subjects to think and talk of, and keep them off the streets. When by all means to be used we can build up a higher class of working-girls, then the wages and the surroundings provided for them will be better."

"But, Deborah, once there was a much brighter class of working-girls. Think of the girls that used to be at Salem and at the other factory towns. They were refined girls, good farmers' girls, they had fair education; they formed clubs, they edited papers and a magazine; they wrote some beautiful things in prose and poetry. I have read about them. But where are they now? In the report of the woman's penitentiary I find twenty prisoners between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, in for terms of not less than two years, for habitual drunkenness and violent conduct—all factory girls. Once they were not so."

"A great number of very ignorant, low girls from foreign countries came in, emphatically *hands*, not heads and hearts also, and were willing to take low wages, because they were willing to live in a crowded, beggarly way, half housed, half clad, poorly fed. The manufacturers engaged them because of the cheapness of such labor, and this element drove out the self-respecting, well-respected factory girl who had been a credit to her employer and elevated her work. If the employers had required a standard of morality, propriety in dress, manners, and language, and been willing to allow the women to be womanly, they might have saved crime and criminals to the State."

CHAPTER XVII.

HELP THOSE WOMEN.

> "So heavenly toned that in that hour
> From out my sullen heart a power
> Broke, like the rainbow from the shower."

DEBORAH and Uncle Josiah were sitting on the roof one August evening. In the waning light Deborah read these words to her uncle from a book that lay in her lap: "Everywhere the woman gets the worst of it. She is the hardest worked and has to do the meanest kinds of work; she is the worst paid; she is always bullied, scolded, threatened, or nagged and sworn at; she has the worst food; she has the lion's share of the trouble and the lamb's share of the pleasure; she has no holidays, she has the fewest amusements. Even in those circles where women do not work and are never kicked, they have the worst of it. Beautiful things have been written about womanhood, damsels, and gracious ladies. Girls do indeed enjoy a brief reign, while they are wooed and not yet won. After that men take everything for themselves that is worth having, save only in those well-appointed and desirable establishments where there is enough to go round for man and wife too."

Deborah closed the book; it was too dark to read more.

"That is largely true," said Uncle Josiah. "Our fallen race is by nature tyrannical and tends to dominate and abuse the weak. Even in civilized lands there are barbarous parents. But all that is not true where Christianity rules the hearts and lives of men. In the Christian home the mother, wife, sister, daughter are sacred. Theirs is the best and not the worst that is to be had."

"I have seen Christian men, professors of religion, and I think really good men, who were selfish, nagging, domineering in their homes, measuring all the world by a capital *I;* and I is a very poor yardstick," said Deborah.

"No doubt you have seen such cases; all are not Christians that bear the name, and religion does not assure perfection here below. I have heard of grace being grafted on a crab-tree, where some of the original crab branches did not seem to have been lopped off. No doubt also you have seen Christian women who were pettish, selfish, and idle. I wish we were all nobler examples of Christianity. And at the end of all it is in the Christian religion that woman is to find her protection, her refuge, her safety for this world as well as the next. That is the only religion which does not exalt the strong as over the weak, which does not deify fighting qualities."

"This that I have read to you, uncle, was written by a man, and not a Christian man, yet a strong defender of women."

"I hope that his own daily practice corresponds with his professions. In the meantime, dear Deborah, I have always told you that while Christian men will do much to defend women, Christian women can do more, and will when they are awakened to the needs and know the sufferings of the wives, mothers, and daughters of the poor."

"Last Sunday afternoon I went with Mrs. Bent to a hospital to ask after a cousin of hers, a laundress, mother of eight children, who lies at the point of death because her husband in a fit of anger broke her skull with a flat-iron. He is in prison; the eight children are in the city Homes for Destitute children."

"Drunkenness and irreligion, irreligion and drunkenness!" cried Uncle Josiah, "these are their fruits to woman because she has little muscular and no political strength. The law protects women in some measure, but it cannot prevent such wrongs as those which are the result of brutal ignorance and vice.

"That the oppressed woman, the suffering woman, is still waiting for her sister woman to be her helper, is in accordance with all the administration of God's providence. When Christ came to save men, he took not on himself the nature of angels, but of those whom he came to save: he became brother to our dust. So the ministry of reconciliation is not committed to angels, but to men. And when Christian women shall wake up to their great trust, then right shall reign, and the lot of the working women shall not only be alleviated, but made honorable and comfortable. When women cease to think first of themselves, of buying in the cheapest markets and confining their interests and acquaintanceships strictly to their own class, then we shall see the dawn of better days: when all young girls shall be respected, and their health, happiness, and honor regarded, when all wives and mothers shall find it possible to care first for their own homes, when all children shall be properly nourished, protected, educated, loved; all these possibilities are in the hands of Christian womanhood."

"I wish those good days would hurry up and come," said Deborah, "for just now things seem worse than ever. The street corners are crowded with idle men on strike, the benches in the squares and parks are full of them, the docks are lined with them; and meanwhile the women who cannot strike must work harder than ever to get rent-money and bread. A poor girl, far gone in consumption, who left work on a machine in my room a month ago, came back yesterday asking for employment. I told her she was not fit for work.

"'There is no food,' she said; 'father and brother are on a strike.'

"I asked Mr. Ames to get her into a Consumptives' Home, and I hope he will, for she is unfit to work; and besides, I think it terribly dangerous and unhealthy for a girl in consumption to be among the other girls; she is coughing constantly, and the others in the hard work, fatigue, and confined air of the work-room are just in the condition to contract disease."

"It is hard, indeed it is hard," said Uncle Josiah. "But how many Christian women are there in this country? Every one of them is in God's intention his message-bearer to other women. She has primarily an evangel, a physical and temporal evangel, to carry to her working sisters. True, very many Christian women are abundantly occupied, but it is safe to say that over one-half of them are not fully occupied, and from a fourth to a third of them are doing nothing at all for God or for humanity. They stroll along life's flowery ways doing nothing but amuse themselves, forgetting that in God's great plan no one walks with aimless feet. I say from one-fourth to one-third are so idle, in the face of the fact that such a large majority of women are working women, because, if you will remember, the ranks of Christian women, of women in evangelical churches, are not largely recruited from the working women, but from the richer women who have leisure. One of the saddest features in the case of the working women is that many of them are so overworked and underfed and ill clad that they are out of the reach of the influence of the churches."

From the street rose the sound of shrill voices of neighbor women in a high quarrel; there were vigorous threats of calling a policeman, of making arrests, of "going to law." Then the strong, even tones of Nurse Jamieson were heard: "Come awa, women. Why wull ye flite ilk ither that a way? Are ye no sailing a' in the same boat? Whaur wull ye fin' friends if no in each ither? Tak' a cup o' tea an' agree; the law 's costly. Why canna ye behave like ladies? Ladies do not fight."

"Ladies! Bonny ladies we be, down here, born in Romaine Court!"

"Ye can cultivate a' the guid behavior that ye will, here or there. The trouble a' begins in yer threeping at ilk ither. A guid word is as soon said as an ill ane; why do ye no mind that?"

"But, Mistress Jamieson, Nora Neal is always quarrelling and growling like a dog with a sore head."

"Well, even a dog winna growl if you quiet him wi' a bone. Gie her guid words, an' she will no quarrel wi' them. Puir body, wi' sic a bad hand, an' three sma' children, and her man cross an' on a strike, hasna she enouch to mak' her cross?"

At this enumeration of her woes, Nora Neal began a loud weeping. "My hand! Look at my hand," she sobbed; "it has not been dressed for two days, and the salve costs so much money I can buy no more, now my man is out of work." As for hard times, she had taken a cup of tea early in the morning, and not a bite since; there had only been bread, and the children ate that, and it was not half enough, and hunger made them quarrelsome!

First, after this tale of woe, fell profound silence for a moment in Romaine Court. Then Nurse Agnes broke forth: "And do I call mysel' a Christian woman, and not go to do up your hand daily? I will fetch linen and warm water and castile soap, and dress it this moment! An' as for the childer, puir lambs, I'll gie them a guid wash, and then a guid supper, and pit them to bed, so they will sleep like tops."

But now the woman with whom Nora had been quarrelling had thrown her arms about her and was trying to comfort her. "Not a bite to-day? Dear heart! Well, my man is in good work and good wages, and I 'll see that you do n't go without dinner again. Wait a bit; I have as good a plate of potatoes and bacon and cabbage, set by cold, as ever you tasted, and you 'll eat it as soon as Mistress Jamieson dresses your hand. Take heart; the strike will be over before long!"

"And what for do the men strike, when all the burden of it lies on the women and children? Was n't the agent scolding her about the rent this very day, and she not able to do a stroke of washing!" cried a neighbor.

"Is it the rent that 's wanted?" said a fat Irish woman. "I have a nickel will help on towards it, and some of the rest of ye may have another. 'Many a little makes a muckle;' is it not so, Mistress Jamieson?"

Some one went around among the denizens of Romaine Court and took up a collection from them, the affair being easy, as all the inhabitants sat on the doorsteps and curbstones until eleven o'clock at night, when possibly it might be cool enough to go in-doors and sleep.

Poor little babies of Romaine Court, more luckless infancy still of slums and alleys, to which Romaine Court was respectable gentility! The babies of happier homes slept in cool, shaded rooms, in cribs or cradles, tenderly watched, carefully put to bed early: these babies of the poor lay in their day-clothes on the bare floors, on the walks, on the knees of mothers or sisters, hot, exhausted, panting, whining, until almost midnight. Poor little girl children of these quarters! playing tag or hide-and-seek, in and out of the halls and cellars, and around into the streets, under the horses' feet, about the doors of saloons, hearing ribaldry and profanity, seeing vice in every form, well acquainted with brawls, arrests, ejections—what shall be done for the girl-children of the Lazarus Quarter? and for the boys whose only playground is the street, the rabble their masters, the grog-shop and the gambling den and the low theatre their paradise? What chance for them to grow up in honesty, cleanliness, industry, and make in the future good fathers and husbands? What shall be done for the Lazarus Quarter?

Uncle Josiah thought that he had found the remedy—the Christ-spirit in the hearts of humanity, producing brotherly kindness, courage, sympathy, fair dealing—none selfishly seeking to rise to power and place upon the fallen bodies of his brethren; none demanding wealth purchased by a fellow's blood and tears. Oh, abiding spirit of holy charity, panacea for human troubles! "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; charity never faileth."

After the long strike of the men, and the additional care and privation and toil of the women, with increased neglect of the children and less proper nourishment, came an autumn of great mortality. "So much sickness!" people said. The streets were full of funerals; the Board of Health became uneasy and made alarming reports; the death-rate was unusual, and the mortuary paragraphs in the papers began to encroach largely on the columns. The deaths in the tenement houses were not often announced in the papers, but when fevers and contagious diseases invade the homes of the poor they make flights thence, and brood with baleful wings over the home of Dives. Sickness and death are essentially democratic in their nature, and very insistent in proclaiming the doctrine of the common brotherhood of humanity.

Nurse Jamieson began to report sickness in this home and that, and to spend most of her time in going from one invalid to another. Old Mrs. Jensen died first; she had far passed the allotted period of life and found it trouble and sorrow. But presently cholera infantum reaped a large harvest among the children; and then fevers fell upon the men and the overtaxed women; and over Romaine Court and its environments blew a cold wind from the realms of death.

What was to be done with the widows, with the orphans, with the broken-down constitutions, with the invalids but half restored, dragging about their daily tasks? Deborah had found how hard a matter living and toiling were in these courts and alleys; now she found how doubly hard being sick and dying were. She had no time now to visit Leila, but she sent her some convalescents to help towards health; she wrote her daily notes and laid before her many pitiful cases of need, and Leila from her couch "reached forth the helping of a hand."

Hard indeed was life that autumn for the poor; but across its gloom the light of Christian help, of Christian charity, "broke like the rainbow from the shower."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MYSTERY OF IT.

"I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions of the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise."

"DEBORAH! Deborah Grosvenor! It surely is Deborah!"

The speaker was a tall girl of twenty-five, with a fine intellectual face. The place was the railway train, for Deborah was going on Saturday evening to stay until Monday with Leila.

Now that the sickness in the neighborhood was increasing, Uncle Josiah sent Deborah out of the city each week in this way. "I promised your father solemnly that I would have instant care of your health," he said.

"My health," responded Deborah, "is perfect."

"Very good: let us keep it so."

"Jacqueline Day, are you back after five years!" cried Deborah, "and we have met on this train!"

"I was sure it was you," said Jacqueline. "I could not mistake the poise of the head, your beautiful hair, and the lines of your features. But you have changed, Deborah, changed wonderfully. What is it?" Jacqueline looked at her critically. "Your face is a trifle thinner, and you have the least bit less color, but it is something else that makes the change. Is it the dress? Once you would only wear dresses from Worth's and very splendid jewelry. Now is it a new notion? You are severely plain in this gray gown, with a cream crêpe tie and no ornaments. I believe I like the new fad better than the old."

Jacqueline herself wore a tailor-made suit, of a soft tan material, and a certain choice simplicity marked her whole appearance.

"As for the suits from Worth," said Deborah gayly, "as I have lost all my money I cannot afford them; and the jewels would not be proper to my station; I am earning my living in a shirt factory."

"Why, you dear girl! I had heard something, two or three years ago, about your loss of property; it did not seem possible."

"It was quite possible, and you have no idea how easily and promptly I came down to the ranks of working women, or up to them; sometimes I think it was a fall up."

"You poor dear!"

"Do n't pity me, I beg of you. I never was as happy, as reasonable and respectable, before."

"Happy—yes, that is it. There lies the change, the look of bored discontent has gone from your mouth and out of your eyes. There is not that supercilious air that once marked Deborah Grosvenor. You look a happier woman."

"So I am."

"And where do you live? out on this line of road?"

"No, in the city, in Romaine Court. I am going to stay until Monday with Leila Stirling. Have you heard of Leila's railroad accident?" And Deborah told Leila's story. "But," she added as she saw Jacqueline's face full of commiseration, "do n't pity Leila either. She never was so happy and so useful in her life. She has found her place in the world, a place where she was needed, and where she would be greatly missed if she went out of it."

And then, as the train swept on, Deborah told of the work Leila had found to do; how money, time, interests were all consecrated to God in the service of humanity.

"There, the train is whistling for my station," she said.

"I cannot leave you," cried Jacqueline. "I must see you longer and I must see Leila. These things in which you are so interested have for two years occupied me. In London I have been, not playing at charity, but studying the needs of my neighbor and the way of help. I shall go with you to Leila; she will welcome me, I am sure."

"Joyfully," said Deborah, and they left the train together.

"Does company tire you, Leila? Do you keep invalid hours?" asked Jacqueline after tea, when Mattie had passed the pretty baby, Linda, around for a good-night kiss and taken her away, and Deborah had been to see the family lodged in the carriage-house, and Jacqueline had chatted for half an hour on the piazza, in the purple twilight, with three or four shop-girls, Leila's last vacation guests, who had now gone off in a room by themselves to play Parchesi. "Can we talk, Leila?"

"The more the better. I am not nervous. I am feeling well and strong, only that I am paralyzed from my waist down. I can talk half the night, and make up for it by sleeping late to-morrow. I cannot get to church; that is one of my deprivations."

"This is a splendid work you are doing, Leila—that baby adopted, this poor woman and her boys growing so fat and happy in your care, these girls given new views and a new lease of life! It must cost you a mint of money."

"Let me tell you, Jacqueline; I figured it up the other day. I am becoming an expert accountant. My company does not cost me as much as the company cost when we entertained our society friends out here. My table and whole style of living are simpler, as more suited to my guests. They do not want French cookery and confections, but good meat, fruit, milk, and vegetables. So far the money which Deborah has laid out for me in charitable work, as some call it—justice work I call it, stewardship work—is not so much as I used to spend, or as my society friends spend, during the year in the usual routine entertainments that are thought necessary to one's place in society. A lawn or archery party, a state picnic, a drawing-room concert, two state dinners, and a ball, in a year cost nearly double what I have spent on Deborah's widows and orphans, lectures and day nurseries. But you see, Jacqueline, our work, Deborah's and mine, is only just opening. We have been working along the edges of affairs. We do not want to make mistakes; we want to know what is needed, and the best way to meet the need. We do n't want to pauperize people, but to treat our sister-women as we would like to be treated, helping them up. We do n't think that we can bring in the Golden Age, but we want to make a beginning. We have hardly yet found out what the wrong is which we should redress. Have you looked into such matters? Is it the wages system? Is it the neglect of the children? Some say one thing, some another."

"I read an article lately," said Jacqueline, "which contended that all wage-labor was not free labor, but a relic of slave labor. It claimed that to the wage system inevitably belong strife, tyranny, the grinding down of the poor by the rich, the hating and chafing of the rich by the poor."

"But if one cannot take nor offer wages for work, how shall one have any work done?"

"The argument was that the wage system involved competition, and competition was speculative contention, trying to place goods on the market in the largest quantities, at the lowest price, and to succeed in this the wages must be reduced to a minimum; and with starvation wages the working classes are brutalized. Over against this age of competition, based on the wage system, the writer proposed to set the age of humanity, based on coöperation."

"I don't see how coöperation can be made to work all along the line," said Leila. "If I have a factory or a store or a farm, I can see how coöperation, an equitable division of profits called by ownership investment and value of labor done, might be arranged. But take the woman who hires some other woman to come in and do her washing, or the owner of a small lawn and garden who hires a workman to come and trim up his trees, sod bare places, and set out shrubs. These are merely for ornament; they produce nothing to the employer but the pleasure of a well-kept place. The man who does the work wants his day's wages paid at once for doing it, and if the wages are fair, sufficient for him to live according to his needs, it seems to me that justice is not contravened in giving them. It is evident that all people, by the very difference in taste, do not need the same amount of money to live on. Take Mrs. Jordan here in my carriage-house; suppose she and I went together to a store to buy a floor-covering for rooms of equal size, our living rooms. A Persian rug, thick, subdued, rich, would take my fancy and be what I wanted and what would give me pleasure to use. Mrs. Jordan would truly consider the rug 'an ugly thing,' and a flowing red ingrain, at seventy-five cents or a dollar a yard, would be just her idea of a floor-covering which would be to her an hourly satisfaction. Her want would be met with thirty dollars, mine with three hundred, for substantially the same purpose. I know that this is so, for she was allowed to come and see the house, and she told the housekeeper that she wondered such a rich lady as Miss Stirling did not have a nice carpet in the drawing-room, and added that she supposed I gave away so much that I could not afford a nicer one. That despised floor-covering had cost nearly a thousand dollars."

The girls laughed.

"I have found in my work," said Jacqueline, "that many things are and must remain unsettled, and that a great many people waste time and strength in demanding the impossible and asking why, why, why?—why these differences? why do the people submit?—when they had much better give themselves to helping those nearest at hand. It is better to do something than nothing. You are right about the women and the children being the real sufferers. The hope of the women of the future is in the children of to-day; and if you want to get women above 'the scrub level' the children must go to school. You have no idea how the children, lifted to a higher grade, can regenerate their homes: they take home new ideas, new hopes, new demands—the parents receive the new cleanliness and order and information from the child, as a prophecy. First the Day Nursery, then the Kindergarten, then the Public School—have the Kindergarten and the Public School compulsory, the Day Nursery attractive as possible, being fully equipped and open in all the quarters; after the Public School the Industrial School, compulsory for all unoccupied children. Then, with no idle, homeless, uncared-for children about the streets, but with all children growing up in decency and order, we shall have orderly wives and sober, industrious husbands the rule of the future, crimes and criminals brought to their minimum."

"Always provided you shut the grog-shops," said Leila. "And I think that the State, as the greater parent, should see to it that all children get their rights of education and shelter."

"And when out of such a well-cared-for generation we get the house-mothers and the fathers of the future, with homes of decency, then will come the Golden Age!" said Deborah.

"We cannot make the State do its part," said Leila, "and the homes and the parents are very different from our idea; and if they *were* all as we wished in point of morals and manners, the best ordered homes and the most respectable people need bread and meat, shoes and hats, and various other things which the present system of low wages for women does not afford."

"If the men were all sober and industrious, if so many men were not drunkards, wasteful and abusive, spending money on drink and in gambling, and time on the streets or in prison, very many women, who now are compelled to work for wages, could live at home and work only for the comfort of their households; and with such a great number removed from the competition of the labor market, work would be more plentiful and better paid for the others."

"What the Moravian missionaries have done for heathen abroad, we must do for heathen at home," said Leila.

"We want a Settlement in every one of the poor wards in every city," cried Jacqueline. "Do you know what a Settlement is?"

"No, I don't," said Deborah. "I know only the little that I have seen."

"A Settlement in a neighborhood is a house, cleaned, well plumbed, purified to be what landlords should be compelled to make all houses—sanitary places. It is furnished with decency and taste. It has curtains, rugs, tables, chairs, a few books, pictures, house-plants—such simple comfortable things as a very small income well administered can attain unto, and yet pure, refined, tending to elevate the taste and ennoble the life. In that house live all the time a few educated women, women of refined Christian characters and large sympathies. Some go, others come; the number is always complete, for when one returns for a time to her former home and friends, some one takes her place.

These women become the friends, sympathizers, helpers, defenders, teachers, examples to all who are near their Settlement."

There was a ring at the front door, and as Leila heard the man servant passing through the hall to answer the bell,

"Who can it be?" she cried, "some one from the down train?"

"Mr. Grosvenor," announced the butler, throwing open the library door.

"Uncle Josiah!" exclaimed Deborah, hastening to meet him. "Uncle Josiah," chimed Leila, holding out her hand from her couch, for she too, desolate of kindred, called the good old man uncle.

"Yes, yes, girls," laughed Uncle Josiah, "let me put down my impedimenta. There now," and he gave Deborah a kiss, and stroked Leila's bright hair as he bent to take her hand.

"And here is Jacqueline," said Deborah; "do you remember Jacqueline? She used to be one of my playmates. Call him uncle too, Jacqueline; he is a universal uncle."

Jacqueline laughed as she gave the old man her hand. "What have you brought us, 'uncle'? I am interested in an uncle who appears unexpectedly in the night and sets such queer impedimenta on the hearth-rug."

Deborah meanwhile had gone down on her

knees to the impedimenta, and loosening a hood and long cloak, revealed a very rosy, chubby, sleepy-looking infant, who smiled cordially into her eyes. "Why, uncle, uncle! this is never that poor forlorn little Theodora that I picked up from the sidewalk and dressed in a towel and two pocket handkerchiefs!" she exclaimed.

"She is that very identical infant," said Uncle Josiah, taking a big easy-chair and complacently regarding Jacqueline and Deborah seated on the rug beside the little one. "Let Leila have a good look at her. Can your baby come up to her, Leila? What do you think of Mrs. Willis as a foster-mother now, niece?"

"She must be perfect," cried Deborah. "Will she take some more waifs into her home and heart? If she will I can hunt them up for her. Why, 'Nobody's baby,' what a sweet little creature you are! Uncle, this reminds me of some of Dr. Barnardo's stories of treasure-trove of human souls, found in gutters."

"You see, Leila," said Uncle Josiah, "I have been out to my old home for a few days on business, and I concluded to bring this child back for Deborah to see. It will encourage her in work to get such results. Wednesday I will take her back to her home, as I must go there again. Meantime I came to spend Sunday here with you girls."

"I cannot tell you how welcome you are," said Leila, ringing for a tray of refreshments for Uncle Josiah, and for her young nurse to take Theodora to bed. "We were deep in talk of Settlements and Working Women's Bureaus, and all kinds of organizations. Jacqueline has been abroad studying up philanthropic work. When Deborah and I went abroad we never thought of such things. Oh, Deborah, what idlers we were!"

"'Forgetting the things that are behind and pressing forward to those that are before.' 'Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more,'" said Uncle Josiah kindly.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SETTLEMENT.

" A full, rich nature, free to trust,
Truthful, and almost sternly just,
Impulsive, earnest, prompt to act
And make her generous thought a fact,
Keeping with many a light disguise
The secret of self-sacrifice."

AGAIN it was Saturday evening, and the three girls, Leila, Jacqueline, and Deborah, were sitting in Leila's library.

" I want," said Jacqueline, " to begin my work at once. My mother and I have talked it all over. We have fifty thousand dollars between us, and we both prefer to live plainly and try to do some good in the world. We mean to take a house with a lawn about it, in the suburbs, but on the street-car line. We shall keep a horse and surrey, and have a woman for the housework and a man for the stable and garden. We mean to take a girl of twelve, and have her trained in light work and table waiting, and when she is seventeen, and able to get good wages, we shall find for her a nice place, and take another girl to train up. That will be one of our little ways of doing good. Another of our ways will be to buy no ready-made garments, but have our sewing done at our home, at good wages, by some city seamstress, who will find a two or three weeks' sojourn at our house, several times a year, a real benefit to her. But our great work, mother's and mine, will be the Settlement. We visited some of the Settlements in London, and resolved to devote ourselves to founding one."

"How happy you are," said Deborah wistfully, "to have money to use, and a heart to use it well, and a mother to be your co-worker!"

"How happy you are," said Leila, "to be well and strong and able to go about and do this work, and know for whom you are toiling!"

"God has his plan for every one!" cried Jacqueline. "He sends into the world no aimless feet, and in the end you would not renounce your task for mine, I am sure. But as to our Settlement. There must be a good gymnasium; it shall be large and used as a lecture-room and concert-room. We shall have also a reading-room and a laundry and three rooms for convalescents, just out of hospital, or for girls on the verge of breaking down, but whom rest will restore. Mother and I will devote a certain amount of income each year to the support of our Settlement, and we shall try and interest others so that the work can be maintained. Before I lease the house I am to go about and secure my right workers, the furnishing and the two thousand dollars that will be the least income with which, added to the one thousand from mother and myself, we can begin work. The expenses of furnishing and renovating will come out of some money which we have for three years been laying aside for this purpose."

"And the place!" cried Deborah; "oh, Jacqueline, will you not choose my district?"

"Yes," said Jacqueline, "as well one ward as another, and the work seems already begun near you. We can begin our Settlement, and some day, who knows? you can open your Working Women's Bureau."

"And I," cried Leila, "can now do my part. Hear my plan, and if it is carried out, with Bureau, Settlement, and '*my work*,' there will be one ward well equipped for moving towards the Golden Age of humanity."

"But what is your work, Leila? What do you mean to do?"

"Tell me, Deborah, is that Day Nursery from which Mattie came in your ward?"

"No. It is one street within the limit of the next ward."

"Well, then, my plan is to have a Day Nursery in each ward where working women enough live to have candidates for the Nursery to the extent of five babies. To begin with, I will establish one in your ward. From five to thirty babies should be the capacity for each Nursery. Where the mother gets less than five dollars a week wages or has over two children, then her babies should be free, for less than five dollars cannot provide food, rent, and clothes for mother and children. Those who are able to pay, on my scale, shall be charged a nickel a day. Now my Nursery is to have connected with it a Bible nurse, with a sort of dispensary, where lint and bandages, poultices and plasters, simple home remedies, and suitable food for the sick, as tea, toast, beef-tea, soup, porridge, rice, fruit, jelly, and crackers, can be given out to needy cases, at the order of the Bible nurse. My Bible nurse is to be a Christian woman of experience, large heart and sound head, who shall have her room next the dispensary in the Nursery, shall go when sent for, night or day, and shall daily make her rounds of the ward, visiting the sick, dressing burns or wounds, making the invalids' beds, bathing them, doing their hair, helping in whatever is needed and reporting all need beyond her help. My ideal is the Bible nurse of the London Bible and Domestic Female Mission, started by Mrs. Ranyard in Dudley Street, St. Giles, London, in 1857. It is one of the noblest, most useful and blessed charities of the age, while one of the most unostentatious and least known. I want one of those true, good, helpful nurses in every ward, helping and healing, but especially teaching, showing the women how to nurse the sick, how to take care of young babes, how to have sanitary arrangements and cleanliness and decency even in poor homes. I want my nurse, or some one even better fitted to do it, to give a weekly lecture on health, on proper food, on beds and bedding, on the airing of clothes and taking care of dish-cloths and cooking utensils, and on conduct in emergencies. Why should the rich or well-to-do, who have so many advantages, be the ones to get all the lectures on baby tending, nursing, food stuffs, and emergencies?"

"That is well thought of," said Jacqueline, "and I am sure you can arrange your home for babies and your Bible nurse and find them great blessings. When I talk of all these plans my heart enlarges and grows hopeful, and I see in every ward the Settlement, the Nursery, with the Bible nurse, the working women's Bureau, and finally the winter garden."

"What! What is that which you have sprung upon us all at once?" cried Deborah and Leila.

"It is not for *you*, not for *us*; it is the 'Work of the City for its Own'—a work which doctors and ministers and public-spirited citizens should arouse themselves to inaugurate, through the city council. Our cities have parks, have bands of music in public gardens, have baths and swimming baths and out-of-door gymnasia for summer, and yet it is safe to say there are only four months in the year when these things are needed. We have long winters, long cold springs and falls, and where can the people gather then? Where is a good place for the boys, out of school hours? Where a place free from temptation for the men? There should be, in every ward, a house with reading-rooms, lecture-rooms, gymnasium—and the children of the public school should be encouraged to give entertainments, with music, speaking, and so on; while our school teachers could give lectures with experiments and pictures, and musical amateurs could bring music, and artists could come with blackboards to entertain, or to really help, by hints on free-hand drawing. These winter gardens, warm, light, bright, with the popular games of the day, with chess, checkers, dominos, fox and geese, solitaire, could compete with the bar-room and grog-shops; they would empty the grog-shops and elevate the people."

And so Deborah constantly found her life growing broader and richer; those financial and social losses which at first had seemed to narrow and restrict her were only gateways of greater opportunity. If she had remained the cold, selfish, idle Deborah of other days, would she have entered heartily into these plans of Jacqueline? Would she have inspired and helped Leila? Deborah had never been a close friend of either of these girls until a common sentiment of Christian charity had drawn them near together.

Uncle Josiah, as Jacqueline's counsellor, had his time and his heart filled with the work of the Settlement, and the sturdy old man seemed to have renewed his youth, so bright and full his life had become. Life proves amply worth the living when we fill it with work for others. Doing God's errands makes time run "in golden currents on."

Nurse Agnes was not left out of these interests; she heard of all that was to be done, and the life of a Bible nurse seemed to her so beautiful that she wished to engage in it; but she had Uncle Josiah and Deborah to take care of, and Uncle Josiah said that the nurses should not be over forty or forty-five years of age when they began work. However, it was almost as pleasant to help select furnishings for the Day Nursery and to discuss the means of securing a proper Bible nurse and also nurses for the little ones. The entire Grosvenor household seemed to be young people, buying a home and making it ready, so regular were their pilgrimages to the house that Jacqueline had leased for her Settlement.

Busy in the shirt-factory as she was all day, Deborah was only free in the evenings, but then some of the ten who were to form the Settlement were likely to be at the house, making plans and looking at the repairs; and through the empty rooms, among the débris of plasterers and paperhangers and joiners, rang the clear voices and happy laughter of girls, and in and out of the purlieus of Romaine Court flitted figures encased in tailor-made gowns and wearing fine boots and eight-button gloves. Deborah thought these girls were far in advance of her former society friends. These girls had a purpose in their eyes; they were girls who lived not for self and selfish amusement, but for noble purposes; they were college or university-bred girls, most of them, with well-trained minds, capable of planning wisely and carrying out their plans. Full of life and of mirth, their wit was worth hearing, and they had no time to waste in gossip or censoriousness, because there was always some good theme worth talking about waiting for them.

Deborah saw clearly that somewhere and somehow she must make time for reading and keeping abreast of the topics of the day, if she was to live at the intellectual level of these new friends. But how could she make time for reading? For nine hours a day she was busy in the finishing-room. "If I were a labor agitator," she said to Uncle Josiah, "I should agitate for an eight-hour law. Where shall we find time for any cultivation of the mind, if we have to spend ten hours daily in getting food for the mouth and covering for the back?"

While Deborah was thus busy, not only with her daily duties, but with her new friends who were bringing hitherto unknown joys into her life, she noticed that Jean's face was growing cloudy. She thought two or three times that she would ask what was wrong, but life was so full now for the once idle Deborah that in crowding cares each day she neglected her purpose towards Jean. One evening Martha lingered after the girls left the finishing-room. "Miss Grosvenor," she spoke up, "I wish you 'd look after Jean a little."

"Jean! is she going wrong!" cried Deborah with a pang at her heart.

"Not yet, and I know you would be cruelly hurt if she did; and if she falls now, I fear it will be never to rise again."

"Tell me all about it, Martha," said Deborah, dropping her account-book. Nothing now was of any consequence but Jean.

"All about it is—she's jealous," said Martha.

"Jealous? I don't understand."

"Why Jean just adores you. She says she first understood how the Lord could stoop to poor sinful folks, and be interested for them and faithful to their cause now that he is in glory, by seeing how you live among us and work for us and are faithful to us."

"I came because I had to—not voluntarily," said Deborah.

"I know. But you came cheerfully, and you might have gone back. Well Jean felt all this; but lately, with the Settlement-house and the young ladies there, you have not noticed Jean so much, and she says if you give her up she might just as well give herself up, and make sure it is all a mistake about the Lord's caring for her!"

"Poor tempted girl!" cried Deborah with tears in her eyes, "how many snares Satan has for souls! I did not mean to neglect her. Martha, you see to it that you all are at home in your rooms to-night, ready to receive company. I am coming to call with the college girls. We want you to help us with our Settlement."

"Thank you for Jean," said Martha frankly, "but you need not think you must bring me in, Miss Grosvenor, for I am glad enough to get the opportunity you are giving me to make a stand for myself."

"We want you all in it," said Deborah warmly. "We cannot do without one of you! These University girls are all as much interested in every one of you as I am, only they do not yet know you quite so well. I wasted in selfishness the years when I had money and leisure, but these girls are good stewards of the manifold grace of God. There is Hannah Lane, the pretty one, with the fluffy yellow hair—what do you think she has done? She has fitted up a room on the first floor for a sewing-room, with a cutting-table and three sewing-machines, so that girls can come in and learn to cut and make their clothes. And Mary Field has taken the charge of putting four bath-rooms in the basement of the house, and girls can bring their own towels and soap and have a bath for five cents. You know there is to be no pauperizing. Mary Field got her money for the bath-rooms by selling some diamonds that her aunt had left her. She says she does not care for jewelry, and as long as the money is needed for Christian benevolence she feels as if she ought not to keep it tied up in gems. Hannah Lane sold a saddle horse to get her money for the sewing-room. She and her sister each had one, and Hannah sold hers, and will share her sister's horse while she is at home. Now I never made any sacrifices like that. Oh I was so selfish and indifferent!"

Martha looked at her with tears in her eyes. "May I tell the girls all that—just what you have said about yourself and all? It will do them good. I know it will be what Jean needs."

"Yes; tell them, and tell them that I try to outgrow the old selfishness, but sometimes I forget and am neglectful, and when I am that, I am unlike my Master and Lord. I confess my fault to you."

Suddenly Martha went behind Deborah. "Do n't turn, do n't look at me. I cannot bear it. I must tell you now. You must know the truth. I went wrong once—terribly wrong. I was a cashier in a shop. I stole some money."

Deborah turned towards the girl. "Dear Martha, I know it must have been through terrible temptation. It was not a fault natural to you." She clasped Martha in her arms.

"I had a brother dying of consumption, and we were very poor. My employer, in consideration of the circumstances, did not prosecute me, but dismissed me without recommendation, and I just could not rise or make any way again until you held out a helping hand to me."

Both the girls were in tears. Then Deborah spoke gently: "We both see where we have failed. Let us take courage for ourselves and others. I remember some lines of a poem I recently read, bidding us

"'Judge none lost, but wait and see
With hopeful pity, not disdain;
The depth of the abyss may be
The measure of the height of pain,
And love and glory, that may raise
The soul to God in after days.'"

"You are learning, you are learning," cried Uncle Josiah that evening, rubbing his hands together and giving a joyful chuckle. "You are being tested, child, and you shall come out like gold. It is worth while."

"Anything is worth while that makes us less selfish and detestable," said Deborah earnestly.

Deborah and Uncle Josiah called for the University girls, and they all made their visit at the rooms where Martha, Jean, Bella, and another young woman lived. It did not take ten minutes for Deborah and pretty Hannah Lane to break the ice of restraint and bring the working-girls into sympathy with the student girls, and a happy hour of talk and explanation followed. Then Mary Field whispered to Jean, and they went out and came back with popped corn, apples, cracked nuts, a box of figs, and a dozen of paper napkins. The feast was joyful, and Martha whispered to Deborah, "It is all right now with Jean, I see it in her eyes."

Jean herself took Deborah aside and said, half crying, "Dear Miss Deborah! I have been so jealous and envious. I thought you had forgotten me for those others. And I said to myself, Perhaps the Lord, having all those beautiful angels up yonder, sets no store by poor me. But I see I was wrong. You do remember me, and he does. I wonder you can, miss, with such lovely young ladies to be with!"

"Would your mother forget you for the angels, Jean?"

"My mither! na, not for a' the angels in glory!"

Jean only relapsed into her Scotch accent when her heart was softened by thoughts of her mother or strong feeling, she had been in America so many years.

"Neither would the Lord who bought you forget you for all the angels, my dear girl," said Deborah. "Good-night."

Finally the Settlement—"No. 1," as Jacqueline named it—was all in order, fully organized and equipped for work. Uncle Josiah had aided in collecting funds for the running expenses. The Settlement was not to be a headquarters for doll-giving, but an exemplary home, a place of resort for comfort, for advice, for improvement. Evening classes were arranged. Mary Field taught book-keeping and typewriting two evenings in each week. Hannah Lane taught stenography and drawing; Jacqueline was ready to give lessons in modern languages, and her mother taught penmanship, embroidery, drawn work; almost any working-girl who wished to pursue some especial study in the evening hours could find instruction, freely given, at the Settlement. A city dressmaker of high repute offered to give two evenings a month in the sewing-room to instruction in cutting and fitting and making dresses and jackets. The whole aim of the Settlement was to refine and improve all those who came under its influence, so that instead of being pauperized, their desire should be to provide honorably for themselves and make friendly return for favors received. Jacqueline had constant proof of this. Girls who used the sewing-room came of their own accord, early on Saturday mornings, to polish the windows of No. 1; girls who were taught in the evening classes came insisting upon doing laundry work. A very hopeful token of the real good that was being done was the self-help and the spirit of honorable independence that were displayed. Deborah was prouder of her girls than ever.

And Deborah herself was wonderfully helped and enlivened by the presence of the girls in No. 1; they were congenial companions, and the evenings spent with them refreshed her as cold water the thirsty traveller. It was only a square or two from Romaine Court to No. 1, and scarcely a day passed when Deborah was not there. She found there the intellectual help that she needed. While some of the members of the Settlement were busy in teaching, there were always others at leisure in the sitting-room. Any of the women and girls of the neighborhood were welcome to come in there, to sit and listen with the rest, for in the evening there was always reading. The books of the day, the subjects of the day, were taken up, and books were read without a comment, unless some one asked a question. The book reviews were read aloud, and if some book reviewed promised to be especially attractive it was either purchased or brought from the city library. It is wonderful how much ground can be covered by two hours of reading, two or three times a week. Deborah learned more and more the virtue that there is in systematized work and study.

And then how much planning went on at No. 1! When reading hours were over, the girls drew around the open fire-place and planned. There were all kinds of plans, plans for being missionaries, and for running a sheep, ranch, and journeying around the world to inquire into the status of the general woman. Deborah planned for her "Working Women's Bureau," and she kept a note-book wherein she wrote the various suggestions made for her Bureau by the inmates of No. 1.

CHAPTER XX.

A TEST APPLIED.

"A maiden knight, to me is given
Such hope I know no fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joys that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hands,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touched and turned to finest air."

JACQUELINE'S Settlement was opened the first day of December, and on Christmas Day there was a tree for the girls and boys of the neighborhood. Leila had found occupation and happiness during November and December in preparing gifts for the ten or fifteen babies in the new Day Nursery and for the mothers also. Every Sabbath afternoon the Bible nurse went to Leila's home, reported the work of the week, the needs of the Dispensary, and the most noteworthy cases; then she took tea with Leila and her companion, went to evening service, and returned home refreshed for next week's work.

Does any one say that in rich America, with its many millionaires, its great fortunes, where a hundred thousand dollars do not make a person rich, where people proclaim that no one need be poor unless vicious—no need existed for a Bible Nurse? Let us take an extract or two from the reports of this nurse. "I found a girl of fourteen with her shoulder badly grown out and deformed by carrying a heavy child for five years; this child being large and fat, but unable to walk from some trouble in the bones." The nurse took the girl to a Surgical Hospital, and the doctor said she must attend one hour at the Physical Culture class each day until cured. No charge would be made. Ah, then this girl would be all right! Not at all. The family are too poor to pay car-fare to the Hospital, and even if that were paid, they are too poor to dispense with the girl's earnings of two dollars and a quarter weekly, which she makes in a tobacco factory, and if she goes daily to the Hospital she will lose that place. Furthermore, she must go on carrying the child; there is no one else to do it, and if she does not carry him about at noon and in the evening he screams all night. Thus Lena is doomed to a miserable, deformed, sickly existence.

Again a case: The nurse found the family of a scissors-grinder; the wife cuts and sews carpet-rags at three cents a pound; she works from twelve to fifteen hours a day; beside her as she works lies a boy of nine, far gone in consumption, inhaling the dust and lint from the rags which infect all the air in the two close, miserable rooms. Again: A widow with four small children; she was sick of pleurisy and for three weeks had earned nothing; the nurse found her unable to stand up, crying over a bundle containing a small clock, a majolica pitcher, a little plaster cast, and a muff, which she was making ready for the eldest boy, eight years of age, to carry to the pawnbroker's. At one home the Bible Nurse found a little girl putting in practice what she had learned at the Cooking School; the mother was sick, and this child was housekeeper. The father having paid the week's rent, and bought two bushels of coal, had but ten cents to provide tea and breakfast for five. The ten-year-old girl, grown discreet as a woman under the hard tutelage of poverty, inventoried the supplies in her cupboard, and found pepper, salt, a stale loaf, and a pint of milk. She bought four cents' worth of maccaroni, a penny pat of butter and a penny roll for the sick mother, a pound of corn meal for two cents, and two cents' worth of molasses. The meal made into mush served with the molasses and half the loaf for breakfast, the other half of the loaf, and the maccaroni with the milk cooked in it, afforded the supper.

"How smart my girl is!" said the gratified father. "I must be a good, steady man when my child can make such good use of what I earn."

The nurse found one morning a woman with six children, just moved into an attic. The woman was crying bitterly as she set her few goods in order. "I have left my husband and taken my poor children with me. He was drink crazy all the time. He used up all I earned, swore at me from morning till night, and kicked and beat the children until I thought he would kill them or make idiots of them. Oh when I married him I thought he loved me and we should be happy together, but drink has spoiled it all!"

For such cases what does the Bible nurse do? She cares for the sick mothers, provides nourishment for the sick child, rescues the poor little treasures that were going to the pawnshop and gives their owner a small sum of money for present needs. She makes suggestions to the ten-year-old housekeeper and provides suitable diet for her mother, while she explains to the fugitive mother legal means for her security and provides work for her and a place in the Day Nursery for the two younger children. The other children of these families are given clothing, so that they can go to the Mission Sunday-school, and the mothers are all engaged to come on Sunday afternoon to the Mothers' Meeting. The sight of a friendly face, the good cheer brought by the words of a strong, capable, self-reliant woman, fill the dull, vacant places in their poor weary hearts and bring courage to take the place of despair. This woman's sympathy and message of good are, no doubt, to these forlorn creatures their first contact with Christian philanthropy; in her, first, for them religion puts on her beautiful garments and walks by their side in heavenly ministration.

There were weeks also when the Bible nurse had to tell her principal of death-beds soothed and dying ears made glad by words of One who entered the grave and came forth leading captivity captive. By means of this Bible nurse Leila, the crippled invalid, went among the homes of the needy. She knew personal needs and sent personal gifts. To the little consumptive a flannel wrapper, a picture book, a bottle of lime juice, and glasses of apple jelly. To keep quiet the sick widow's children went dolls and a box of ninepins. The poor abused wife received bedding and furniture. Sometimes the Bible nurse brought women or children to see the lady who had been a sister born for their adversity. Then Leila had them served with refreshments, and so filled their visit with good cheer that it seemed like a little piece of heaven.

"I do not wonder, Deborah," said Leila, when one evening Uncle Josiah and Deborah came to visit her, "I do not at all wonder that you so much enjoy work among the needy. I feel that I never knew such interest, such true happiness, as I find in helping them. This life of service is real living."

"I think now nothing could turn me from it," said Deborah.

"Suppose that now you came unexpectedly into some money," said Uncle Josiah, "what would you do with it?"

"Use it for starting my Bureau, if it was enough."

"What, first of all? I should suppose that you would arrange to leave the shirt-factory, support yourself out of what you had, and give what you could spare—and your time, if you could spare any."

"That might do, uncle, if the work in the factory were hurting me at all. But it is not. I am perfectly well, and also I know that I am of use in the factory. I am a useful forewoman to the girls, and not a poor one for the firm. There is no reason why I should wish to stop earning my living. Work is far less wearisome than such idleness as I once had. I do truly think that if I received money now, I should put it into my cherished plan of a Working Women's Bureau. I could start a Bureau only in one ward. But some one else might like the plan, take the hint, and start a Bureau in the next ward, and so on, until every ward in the city had one."

"Not the rich people's wards, where all women live at ease?"

"Yes, yes, in them too. They should have their Bureau where the women, the philanthropic workers, should meet and devise plans for helping the children, caring for the sick, giving industrial training to the young boys and girls, benefiting the servant women and elevating them morally as a class. In short, in the rich wards the Bureau should be an institute for workers. Why how much I once needed such a training!"

"Would you have gone near such a Bureau in those days?"

"I might, if it had been made fashionable and stirred up my curiosity by being talked of in my set. If some one of the social leaders had taken hold of such an enterprise, they could have drawn into it us young girls who looked up to them as our examples."

"It is very hard to serve God and mammon," said Uncle Josiah, "and when a woman becomes immersed in the duties of philanthropy she has little time for balls and operas and card-parties; she is presently considered Puritanical and ceases to be a social leader."

"Perhaps some one will arise," said Deborah, "who can hold her social throne in influence, because of some commanding force and grandeur in her character, while at the same time she is an enthusiast in philanthropic work. Thus she will turn the energies of girls of wealth and leisure into the channels of Christian service. When such a one arises, we shall all, rich and poor working women, be willing to sit at her feet. As for me, uncle, what a fantasy of fairyland is this of my ever again having the opportunities of money! Why do you not ask me how I will farm lands in the moon, if ever I hold any in fee simple?"

"I only wished to learn how much you had changed in theory since you were Deborah the unready."

"Well, I certainly hope that if it is in me to be selfish again if I am prosperous, the Lord will grant me only such measure of prosperity as I shall be capable of using properly."

The winter passed away and February brought the first crocus and Valentine's Day.

Uncle Josiah went away early, and came home at nightfall, saying, "Deborah, I have news for you."

"What news? From Leila?"

"No. Business news—news from your father's former partner. I have six thousand dollars for you."

Deborah started to her feet. Once six thousand dollars would have seemed very little to the heiress of a million, but now it seemed so much! "Uncle, is it possible?"

"It is a fact. It is not wealth, but it can be good-by to Romaine Court and the shirt-factory."

"O uncle! I do not care for that! Romaine Court is not Arcadia, but we live here with tolerable comfort; we have so many advantages here that our neighbors do not share. We can surely get along here if others can. Unless—unless you and Nurse Jamieson want to get away."

"Oh I like it here; I am doing some good here, and that is a great matter for a man who has reached my time of life, idle time."

"You will never have idle time; you are a born worker."

"And I like living here the noo, my lamb," said Nurse Agnes. "Dinna think o' us. Think o' yersel."

"I shall think of my girls," said Deborah stoutly. "I am young and strong and unencumbered. Now or never is the time for me to do a good work. I shall plant my Bureau! It will be a very humble little Bureau at first, with only that money; but if it is pleasing to God he will make it grow."

"Consider carefully, my child. Do not be rash. Do not do what you may presently regret. Suppose this is your last money?"

"I have myself—hands, feet, eyes, senses. Other women live by the help of their ten fingers, why not I? Uncle, it is written that 'whoso putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God.'"

"And where shall the Bureau be planted?"

"Here in this ward. If we can get one ward properly equipped for helping people to help themselves, then other wards may copy, and the work may spread. Here we have a ward Nursery and a ward Settlement, and I will start a ward Bureau; then the city may give us a ward winter garden. It would not cost one-half of what is lost or stolen from the city yearly. Then we should be a well-equipped ward."

"Not fully equipped still. I have a plan for something more."

"What is it, uncle? tell me."

"In every ward where there are factories I want to see a model factory, conducted on liberal Christian principles. I want not only one, but two or three, so that people shall see how Christian principle works in business as between employer and employed, and so that others will follow the example."

"Rendel Brothers have a factory that is rapidly reaching this ideal of a working place, and promoting the ideal state of feeling between employers and employed. Here again our ward is standing at the forefront of experiments in Christian philanthropy."

"That is true, and by the time Rendel Brothers have perfected their plans and brought the establishment up to their ideal, I hope that others will fall into line."

"It is owre late," said Nurse Agnes; "you will be weary the morn, Miss Deborah."

"This six thousand dollars makes for me a noble valentine," said Deborah, "and I shall get to work with it as soon as I can, so that I may make my Working Women's Bureau an Easter offering to my Lord."

"Let us have prayers," said Uncle Josiah, reaching for the Bible, "and we will ask the Lord to give us the spirit of wise counsel, so that we can plan in his fear and by his aid, and be blessed to carry all our plans to completion."

Probably there was no girl in the city who felt as rich as Deborah Grosvenor did that night. When she went to bed she could not sleep. She lay awake rejoicing, praying for help to carry out some noble plan, to do well some work for God. All that she asked was to lay herself and her little fortune on God's altar; it is the altar that sanctifieth the gift. The moonlight fell broadly into her room—oh small, plain room, that had been to her as a Bethel! She had "no backward thoughts and no returnings" towards her home of luxury, full of costly trifles, where splendor had lapped her into forgetfulness of God and of her fellows. True, her æsthetic tastes had not changed; she would still have enjoyed beauty of form and color, ease, fragrance, grace; she would have thought it right to share and use these still, if God had willed to give them in such measure that she could use without abuse and enjoy without selfishness. Deprived of what she had formerly possessed, she had found a deeper, more engrossing joy in devoting herself to the uplifting of her working sisters.

> "The high desire that others may be blessed
> Savors of heaven."

The next evening there was to be a meeting in the interests of working women; to some it would be a dry and tedious meeting, held by a committee which had been investigating the condition of working women, and came armed with abundant statistics as to homes, numbers, health, wages, character, occupations.

"It is right," said Deborah at the work-room, "that you girls should understand yourselves as a class; you had better go."

She went herself, taking Jean, Bella, and Martha.

When the meeting was over, as they came back towards Romaine Court—the girls going joyfully as their dear Miss Deborah's bodyguard —"There 's a fire!" cried Jean, pointing to a red glare; "hark to the engines and the people rushing along two streets beyond! I believe it is near Mrs. Bent's. I hope she wont be burned out. She has made her little rooms so cosey for herself and Mabel and that sick niece she takes care of."

"Let us go that way, keeping out of the crowd," said Deborah anxiously. "I cannot bear to think of such a trouble for Mrs. Bent."

"It 's her block, sure enough," said Jean, when they had gone a few paces farther. "I 'll run on; I 'm so strong; I may help Mrs. Bent while others do n't think of her."

She sped away, and Deborah followed with Martha and Bella. Finally on a corner, beyond the crowd, in a little damp area before an office, lo a trunk, a chintz-covered box, a bed, a few quilts, and, watching beside the forlorn heap, Mabel Bent! "Oh, my dear!" cried Deborah.

Mabel burst into tears; she pointed to the few goods. "It is all we have left," she sobbed, "and our home was so sweet!"

The scene was so pathetic that Deborah and her two girls wept for sympathy.

The fire roaring and leaping, the rolls of smoke dropping low, the swaying crowds, the flashing engines, these made up the great picture. This group of girls weeping over the rescued Penates was as the little corner-sketch on the margin of an artist's proof!

"Where is your mother?" asked Deborah.

"She is bringing Cousin Molly, and Jean ran on to help her."

A moment after Mrs. Bent and Jean appeared carrying poor Molly, but as they almost reached the corner an engine with its accompanying crowd whirled up the street and Mrs. Bent was knocked down. Impulsively Deborah sprang forward to help her. Some men carrying a ladder turned in the narrow space, and Deborah was struck on the head. What matter? It was only one woman more fallen and trampled over in the rush of life. Women should be keepers at home and not out in such places!

But as Deborah fell, a big lad, mounted with the firemen on the engine, gave a loud cry, "My lady!" and down he flung himself and pushed here and there and had lifted Deborah's unconscious form while Bella and Martha threw up their arms and ran forward. It was but a minute or two, then the little group had re-collected; Deborah was now laid upon Mrs. Bent's mattress, supported by Jean and Oliver, Mrs. Bent upholding Molly, and all crying over this still rigid form that before them had always seemed so active, so strong, so brave, going in and out as an angel of mercy.

"Martha," said Jean, "you run away for a doctor and on to tell Mistress Jamieson. Bella, you look after Molly and help Mrs. Bent get her and the things to our rooms. Oliver, you and I can carry our young lady home."

"I could carry her across the world!" cried Oliver, "if it would do any good. Oh, Jean, wont she speak to us more? She has spoken to me like a voice out of heaven! Is she dead?"

"She 's no deid," said Jean sturdily; "what wad we a' do if she were deid? The Lord wadna tak' her awa' fra sic a hantle o' poor fules as we are, wha need her sae!"

The depth of her emotion had rendered to poor Jean all her Scotch, and as Oliver observed later to Bella, "Jean did not speak one word of proper English all the five days that Miss Grosvenor lay in her bed."

Uncle Josiah was out of town that night, and Jean was the mainstay of the occasion: she fought furiously the proposition of the doctor to take the injured girl to a hospital. "Mistress Jamieson and I can nurse her weel," she cried hotly, "an' I hae twa hunner dollars in bank yet, o' my ain demeges money, an' I can lay it all oot in takin' tent o' her. She 's welcome to the last penny, an' my life to boot! sae she is!"

It was Jean who went on foot through the night, and brought the best surgeon in the city to Deborah's bedside, forcing him to come by her tears and her eloquence. It was Jean who sat statue-like by Deborah's bed, and who took no rest but snatches of sleep caught lying on the floor at the foot of the bed. It was Jean who three or four times daily signalled from the window with a kerchief to the crowd of factory girls and mission children who came to get news of "their lady."

"If I wave a white kerchief, ye may ken she 's doin' weel," Jean had said, and the kerchief was always waved, and at the end of five days, Jean, almost hysterical with joy, rushed down to her constituents announcing, "She 's brawly! she 's brawly! an' in five days mair we 'll tak her intil the kintra, to Miss Stirling for a little, an' then she 'll be amang us ance mair!"

Deborah, lying on her little white bed, smiled at Agnes. "This is all right, nurse dear; until now I have had no experience of sickness or pain; now I know what it is among my poor."

And those days had passed so quickly that they had scarcely been reckoned!

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FAIR FABRIC.

"And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

"I wondered at the beauteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers;
You scarce could see the grass for flowers."

THE spring came and Deborah had made ready her Easter offering to God—all that she had, even all her living, the dedicated six thousand dollars.

Uncle Josiah had scrupulously left her to manage this Bureau business entirely by herself; he had not helped her as he had Jacqueline.

"I am not responsible," he said to Nurse Agnes, "for the training of Miss Jacqueline Day; if as a young lady she desires friendly aid in her plans and their execution, I am glad to render it. But this matter of the Bureau is to help educate Deborah, and to show what business talent she has, and what the methods of her philanthropy shall be; so I shall not even make a suggestion to her. I shall restrict myself entirely to carrying out what she concludes should be done."

Agnes listened to this discourse with admiration: she often told herself that "Maister Josiah used verra fine words, like to an organ. The words themsel's she didna always unnerstan', but aye the drift o' them; and that was the main thing. There were some preachers," Nurse Agnes concluded, "who were the same i' the poolpit; the drift ane could unnerstan', but not a' the gey fine language; however, the drift o' it was the main thing, though fine words wi' a gran' soun' weel became the grandeur o' the house o' God, like the soun' o' an organ."

Deborah, left to herself, sought out a house and found one in Bell Street, just two blocks distant from Romaine Court. The house was newer than most of those in the neighborhood; it was made of brick, with a basement of four rooms, and three stories, each with three rooms and a hall. The owner of this house being in need of ready money, Deborah purchased a five years' lease from him for twenty-five hundred dollars. Uncle Josiah smiled to himself when he saw the carefulness with which Deborah bargained, examined the title, had a lease carefully drawn up, and the owner's insurance secured to herself for such loss as might accrue from fire before her lease was terminated. "I shall take as good care of the place as I can," said Deborah, "but if it burns down with two or three years of my lease unexpired, I cannot lose rent money for all that time. I must have back out of the insurance the five hundred a year for the unexpired time. This is the Lord's money that I am spending, and I mean to be a good steward."

The lease secured, Deborah spent one thousand dollars on such alterations and furnishing as she needed and put in bank twenty-two hundred dollars, saying that for five years she should spend five hundred a year on the Bureau.

"Why this five years?" asked Uncle Josiah.

"With the most careful management," said Deborah, "five years are all that I can cover with six thousand dollars. And five years will be enough to show whether my idea is worth anything, and to reveal to me any methods to make the Bureau even partly self-supporting. If at the end of five years my Bureau has vindicated its *raison d' etre*, then perhaps Leila or some of her friends, or some philanthropist whom you may discover, may be ready to supply whatever the Bureau itself cannot supply, and so continue the work. If in five years I do not make it clear that it is a useful and needed institution, let it die a natural death."

"That is sound sense," said Uncle Josiah; "all such things are experiments in their initiative. We have bought a yoke of oxen and we go to prove them."

"Have we any pieces of our own furniture left that will do for the sitting-room of the Bureau?" asked Deborah; "are all the goods from the attic used up? Where did you store them?"

"In a friend's loft," said Uncle Josiah, "and I think I can find enough there for the sitting-room. I 'll bring all now to the Bureau. There is not much."

"After work-hours to-night," said Deborah, "you and Agnes and I will go to 51 Bell Street, and I will show you how I mean to arrange it. I have had the alterations made, and they cost me two hundred dollars."

"So you have eight hundred dollars for furnishing?"

"Yes; and these things that we have here. We can make it do. Agnes and I will make up the bedding here on the machine."

Uncle Josiah and Agnes found 51 Bell Street clean and bright, the door and window-frames newly painted, and "Working Women's Bureau" in large red and black letters, arching the front-door. The basement of four rooms had been arranged for a kitchen, dining-room, and laundry, while the fourth room had been divided into three bath-rooms. The kitchen had in it a range and a large refrigerator; the laundry three stationary tubs, two benches, a clothes-frame, ironing-table, and a laundry stove.

"Now for the first floor," said Deborah. "This front room is for the office. Next behind it is Nurse Agnes' room, and behind that, this room with sun also, like the other two, shall have two beds in it and be our invalids' room. As Agnes is to superintend the office and the invalids, I put her here between the two. The house is on a southwest corner, with the hall on the north side, so we have sun in all the rooms. Except for the size it is a splendid house for my purpose; and as for size, why I could not afford to maintain a larger Bureau these first years. Now come up to the second floor. This front room is to be our sitting-room, next is my room, and the back room is for Uncle Josiah. Up stairs again now. This front room shall have a double bed and one single bed in it; these other two rooms a double bed each, and the hall you see is square at the back and has a good window; I shall put a sewing-machine, two chairs, and a divan made of a box to hold sewing, and it shall be a place for the girls to do their own making and mending. I can accommodate seven well girls and two semi-invalids. A small beginning, but enough to test the experiment."

"And what girls shall live here, and why?"

"Just girls who are out of work, homeless, and have no money to pay for bread. When they are provided for, they shall go and leave room for others. They must between them do the work of the Bureau, and they must conform to its rules, which shall be the very fewest possible. I don't mean to help girls to be idle or lawless, but to help them to be self-supporting, self-respecting, and well-respected. As I must keep my place as forewoman, I fancy Agnes will have the heavy end of the business to attend to, but you wont mind that, will you, Agnes? You are strong, and it is the kind of helping work that you love. You will be completely happy if you get a pair of invalids under your control to pamper and cosset and make them take herb-teas and rubbing, eh!"

"Ay, child, you know what I like. I winna min' the work. It is a true proverb, 'A dog winna growl if you fill him wi' a bone.' The girls to tak' tent o' will be my bone."

"And you know so well how to advise girls and to take care of them; you are such a nurse, Agnes!"

"Ay, 'every man at forty is either a fool or a physician.' It wad speak ill for my observation an' I could not tell a few lassies what was for their guid," replied Agnes, highly flattered.

Two weeks after this inspection of the house all was furnished and ready for possession.

Jacqueline, Deborah, Mary Field, and Hannah Lane, were running from basement to third story, inspecting everything, merry and voluble as a bevy of girls just let loose from a boarding-school.

These girls, all of whom had during all their lives enjoyed more than a competence, Deborah, who had floated on a sea of golden luxuries, were in raptures over this home, so rigidly plain in its appointments! Was there ever such a nice range—just as good as new, if bought at second-hand! Such a convenient refrigerator, and so cheap, because the outside had been marred by being carried out from the warehouse through a fire! "Even fires do some folks good," cried Hannah. The deal table was large, snow white, spick and span new, the three yellow chairs were the most admirable yellow chairs ever sold at fifty cents each. Two roller-towels, a big wash-bowl, a row of hooks! How the tin-pans shone! "And the cooking utensils, disposed on an open shelf where they will get plenty of air and exhibit always their state of cleanliness, look so housekeeperly," said Jacqueline. The dining-room had a painted floor, a long pine table covered with a brown linen cloth, twelve chairs at fifty cents each, and an arm-chair for Uncle Josiah. There was a side-table with a pretty scarf; over the two front windows was trained a parlor ivy, and in one of the side windows stood three pots of geraniums in bloom.

O dining-room of the house of Dives, where the walls were painted by an artist imported from Italy, the furniture was the richest that could be had, the side-board was loaded with plate and cut glass, all the linen was embroidered with a monogram, and long mirrors made the vista of aviary and conservatory that opened from one end of the room seem endless!

Dives' daughters found this little dining-room in the Working Women's delightful, even with such gorgeous halls of banquet in their memories!

"Three bath-rooms! how nice!" cried Mary Field, "and I see this one is for yourself, Deborah; that is a good idea; we have found it so in our Settlement; humoring some of our little personal notions of taste will do more than indulgence in luxuries to keep up our health and courage while we do this work."

Then the office was admired: a desk, a little rocking-chair for Deborah, a large easy-chair for Agnes, a table, a couple of shelves of books, some chairs, a work-basket, a City Directory, Postal Directory, a Dictionary, a Bible, on the table, a grate with an open fire.

"That 's for good ventilation," said Deborah;

"if Agnes is to sit here all day, she must have it as healthful and comfortable as possible."

The sitting-room had muslin curtains, a large rug, a Franklin stove, a corner book-case, a few pictures, a bracket with a Rogers statuette upon it, some stools which Deborah had made from little boxes and upholstery cloth, a table with a handsome cover. Most of these things Uncle Josiah had brought as the last relics from the wreck of the house of Dives.

Deborah's room was white, simple, pretty, and when she opened it she herself exclaimed with surprise, for Leila had sent her a beautiful wash-stand set, a quilt of silk and down for the bed, mull curtains and shams, and a delightful chair, converting the plainness of the room to real beauty. "Beside my elegant room," said Deborah, laughing, as she threw open the next door, "Uncle Josiah's looks very plain."

"Iron camp bedstead, rug, two camp-chairs, wash-stand, bureau, table," inventoried Hannah; "he is no worse off than the late King of Prussia. If I remember rightly his Majesty did not have so much in his bed-room."

"At all events it is just as Uncle Josiah wants to have it."

The stairs and the hall floors were bare, stained and varnished; the rooms for the girls had window-shades, iron bedsteads with knotted blue counterpanes, each a wash-stand with three large drawers, bureau-fashion, a table and looking-glass, and three chairs. Simple, even bare, but airy, sunny, and spotlessly clean, and comfortably warmed in cold weather by the furnace which heated halls and stairways.

Finally "the hospital" room with its two single beds, its rugs and pretty pictures and flowered muslin curtains, was visited.

"I wanted this to be pretty," said Deborah, "so, as I had to have the walls kalsomined for health's sake, I had a border of roses put around the top and a centre oval of roses in the ceiling, and used this flowered scrim for draperies. I think it looks really cheerful and refreshing. Leila sent me this pair of pretty vases, and this pair of engravings—'Mercy at the Wicket Gate,' and 'Pilgrim talking to Faith, Hope, and Charity.' Sick people need pretty things to cheer them. All our dishes are the commonest white stone ware, but I bought a few with pink flowers and edges, to send up here for the sick ones. The girls who are worn out and out of work are so low-spirited, poor souls, they need something to divert their minds and entertain them."

"She thinks of everything, my Miss Deborah," said Agnes, who stood with beaming face behind the inspecting group. "She is her grand-mither o 'er again, and I always said it. Come and see what a nice snug room she has made for an old body like me. She knew well I didna care for new fangled notions like scarfs and posies, but it is all snug and convenient, with my work-bag and my Bible handy, and a stool for my feet, and a bureau wi' boxes, so I can keep the bit things I loe best."

"It is all complete, and done on so little money!" cried Mary.

"Deborah, you are an organizing genius; you should have control of large funds and administer a great work."

"If she should, she would," said Uncle Josiah; "if the Lord saw that she was the one for such a place, she would have the place."

"The Lord saw that I was an unprofitable steward," said Deborah; "I hid my Lord's money, never put it to any use, and so he finally took it away. If I have this ability for service, it is all the more pity that I did not use it when I might."

"If you had it, it was only as seed; it needed the sun and rain of circumstance to develop it. The wind beats the trees and the plants, and we think it will destroy them, but lo, it is only unrolling the leaves, not stripping them off."

They had all gone up to the sitting-room, and Uncle Josiah, leaning back in the large easy-chair that had once served his brother Dives, talked as he loved to talk. "My dear girls, to-morrow you will see the churches full of flowers; if you should go out into the country you would see the grass starred with dandelions, hawks-weed, blue violets, hyacinths, anemones, phlox, spring beauties, millions of flowers, so that every roadside and pasture seems like a garden. This is the slow result of winter frost and showers! So God makes some barren hearts soft and fruitful with the frosts of poverty and the showers of sorrow, that they may bloom for his delight. Look at Deborah! I am afraid that, though she is now popular, once you used to call her 'proud Miss Grosvenor,' 'cold Miss Grosvenor,' even 'disagreeable Miss Grosvenor.'"

Jacqueline burst into a merry laugh, and throwing her arms around her friend said, "Deborah! I confess that is just what I did call you! Say that you forgive me, dear!"

Deborah gave one of her rare, brilliant smiles. "I was so lazy, bored, indifferent, that you should have called me 'that detestable Miss Grosvenor!'"

"Tell us, Deborah, what are your lines of work here," said Mary.

"I shall make friends with the press, and enlist the papers in defence of my working-girls.

I shall bring worn-out shop-girls, or feeble convalescents just out of hospital, here for nurse to coddle. I want you all to spread the news among your friends that sewing-girls and nurse-maids, possibly a nursery governess or so, well recommended and investigated, may be found here. Girls thrown out of work penniless shall have refuge here and be helped to places; women robbed nefariously of furniture, sewing-machines, wages, may bring their cases here to be investigated and a just settlement be obtained. One thing I am resolved upon: I myself, my former wealth, friends, and position, shall not be talked about and published about in this connection. My work, my time, my little money, myself, I give here, but the privacy of my individuality I mean to have respected. I do n't want to be a nine days' wonder, in default of something else for the public to talk about."

"Miss Deborah," said Nurse Jamieson, pulling her young lady's sleeve, "what time is for the tea-party the night?"

"Seven," said Deborah.

"What fashionable company are you going to have at that hour?" demanded Hannah Lane.

"Working women who work until six and must have time to go home and put on their best array. Three girls are to come here, one from a hospital and two who are out of places: they will begin our family, and that our table may be full for a housewarming, I have invited Jean, Martha, Bella, Nan, Mrs. Hodge and her niece, Oliver and two other boys, to come to supper, a royal spread of Nurse Jamieson's rolls, boiled corn-beef, ginger-bread, apple-sauce, and pickles. We shall not be so lavish usually, but this is 'infair-day,' as Agnes calls it. After the supper and some talk and singing I am to read them a story, and then Uncle Josiah will have prayers and send them off by ten. Did you observe that I had a lovely pot of ferns on the middle of the dining table? Leila sent that for my party."

"That boy Oliver is becoming a very presentable lad under your administration," said Mary Field; "he has a good physique, a pair of honest eyes and a friendly smile; he carries himself like a self-respecting fellow. You 've made a man of him."

"Next year he is to be promoted to be a foreman of the packing room, and get four hundred dollars a year," said Deborah. "He is planning to find a little three or four room house out in the suburbs, where his mother can find work for neighboring families and his little half-brother can be brought up free from the dangers of sidewalk-schools in the city. If his aunt

Hodge cannot find housework near their new home she will come in to the rubber-factory when Oliver comes to his work. She gets five dollars and a half a week."

"Leaves her three seventy-five when her car-fare is paid," said Mary.

"Yes, but count quiet and fresh air something," said Deborah.

CHAPTER XXII.

THROUGH HONOR AND DISHONOR.

"The old order changeth, giving place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

"FIVE hundred a year, and the housework done by the girls; this would not support the Bureau, with its family of ten or twelve, even if they were fed with the utmost plainness," said Uncle Josiah to himself. "What will she do about it?"

He did not suggest the problem to Deborah; he waited and left her to take her own way about it, watching as one who watches a crucial experiment in a laboratory. Deborah also had seen the need of additional income for her Bureau.

"The girls who live in the house should work for their maintenance," she said to Jacqueline, "and seven of them, or nine if you count two in the hospital room, who are generally well enough to do something, can get through with our plain housework with about two hours' work a day, or even less. Given then an hour and a half each daily for their own washing, making, and mending, with the evening free for recreation or classes, they should each give three or four hours to some kind of income-bringing work. This also will give them a habit of independence and show them some fresh avenues of self-support."

But at first Deborah found that getting work to be done at her Bureau was not easy. She was at once regarded as a "middle man," and all the "sweaters" leagued against her: where factories would give home-work to one or two, as soon as work for seven or eight was mentioned a new factory was suspected, and "We keep our work for our own hands," was the answer made to her. She came too upon unexpected obstacles in this search for "home work."

She applied at a small establishment where seven or eight knitting-machines were constantly turning out stockings and underwear. All articles that came from the machines must be carefully looked over, dropped stitches taken up, buttons and button-holes provided, and buckles put on. This finishing work, ill paid as she knew it must be, would yet be a help in earning the home income.

But Deborah was told that there was no work to give out, and one of the women who superintended the others, and also ran a knitting-machine, explained it to her as they walked away from the establishment. This was Stella whom Deborah had known in the rubber-goods factory, and as Deborah had gone to the knit-goods establishment about six in the afternoon, when her own work at Rendel Brothers was over, she and Stella walked away together.

"You see it is this way," said Stella. "The owners of this place are not rich, and the girls who are their relations and acquaintances are not rich. They live at home and are supported comfortably by their friends; but if one of them wanted a watch or a pair of bracelets or a guitar or a handsome satin dress, why it is beyond the means of her friends, and so she earns it, and her way is to take our goods and finish them. Every bit of our finishing is done by girls who are in comfortable circumstances, and who earn money only for ornaments or luxuries. I know one young lady who said in the shop that she had bought a fifty-dollar gold chain with her earnings for nearly a year; and another is saving to get sixty dollars for ear-rings. Another bought finger-rings."

"How absurd!" cried Deborah.

"And it takes away work that poor women who stay at home with babies are in desperate need of."

"And yet what can be done about it? If

these girls choose to do the work they have a right to ask for it, and the employers have a right to give it to them; and the use made of the money is not a matter in question. An employer cannot ask, ‘Are you going to pay your rent or feed your children or buy ear-rings with these wages?’ ”

“I suppose not,” said Stella, who was a very intelligent woman. “Yet these girls who do not need to pay rent or buy bread or shoes, who can save and can afford to wait for the money for unnecessaries, take work at lower figures than the rest of us can, and so they lower the rate of wages. They can earn two and a half or three dollars a week, and at the end of a month they will have ten or twelve dollars in hand. We must get our four fifty or five a week; and scrape and save as best we may, at the end of the month we are well off if we have a dollar in hand. Their friends help them; we have to help support our friends, and it makes a heap of difference. I do n't see how it can be helped, but it is hard.”

Deborah explained why she wanted this work and asked Stella to come over to the Bureau and take tea and see what was going on there. As they went towards Bell Street, Stella suggested that Deborah might get the bags of a certain flour-mill to mend, and perhaps to make. “Only you would need a single-threaded machine that carries a thread like string," she said.

"I do not think. I had better buy a machine just for that. I need income at once, not further outlay."

"You can mend the bags on the machine that you have with the coarsest thread and needle that it will carry. And I think your uncle could get you the contract. Then why do n't you try the express and freight tag business?"

"Firstly, because I never heard of it."

"You know those oblong tickets of thin brown paste-board, with two corners clipped off, that are used to tag freight and express parcels? Millions of them are used each year. They are stamped out by machinery, and put in packets of one or two hundred. Then they must have the rivet or eyelet-hole punched in and eyeletted, and a piece of string knotted through the eyelet. Tags, eyelets, and string are sent you. Your capital must be one shoe-maker's eyelet-punch for each two workers—one girl eyelets, one ties. The pay is small, but it is quite easy work, and your girls could do a good many. But in that, Miss Grosvenor, as in all the rest that is capable of being made decent home-work, you 'll find the competition strong from girls who are comfortably off and are only earning luxuries or pocket money."

After Stella had taken tea at the Bureau and had examined everything, she said to Deborah, "It is a splendid idea: in the end it will prove to be just what we need, and you will be thanked and praised. But at first be sure you will be suspected and blamed."

"For what, of what?" demanded Deborah.

"As soon as the girls find they are doing a little work, no matter how little it is, for which the Bureau gets the pay, they will begin to shout 'slave labor,' 'apprentice work,' 'grinding down,' and so on. They will not think board, fuel, rent, lights, health, baths, laundry, worth a dollar a week, but every dozen of tags or mill-bags done for you will seem to be worth at least fifty cents. They will be miserably ungrateful, because they have been brought up in a hard way without any exercise of gratitude. Then too the priests and the Sisters will no doubt raise a cry of 'proselyting.'

"Some of them will see that the work is good and will silently appreciate it. But many of them will think that the religious life of your Bureau, your blessing at table, family prayers, Bible-classes, evening instruction, will lessen the faith of their members who fall into your hands, and they will oppose you. More than that, they may suspect that business people and charitable people will like your Bureau, substantially like it in money, groceries, and dry-goods, and that all this will be so much less for the Sisters making quest; so they will spread ugly reports about you."

"I shall make friends with the newspapers and the police."

"That will be all right. But the poor folks around you, the girls, will not see the papers; they will be more or less affected by this whispered scandal and criticism. It is easy for human nature to take stock in evil reports; we are slow to use our own observation, it is so easy to pick up a 'they say.'"

"I see. I shall have some opposition I did not count on. Excuse me, Stella. I did not know you very well at the rubber-goods place, and I did not know that you were an educated girl as your language shows that you are."

"I graduated at a high-school and had a year at a Normal-school. I was once a nursery governess. I married young; my husband was captain of a coasting schooner. He was drowned. Fifteen hundred dollars came to me finally from his insurances, but I made up my mind to educate our little son out of that and give him a good trade as he should choose. He is a very bright boy now and nine years old. My sister is married to a barber, and my boy and I board with her and she takes care of him while I work.

I send him into the country to some friends every vacation.

"After the rubber-factory proved dangerous to my health I succeeded in finding this knitting establishment. By being very careful I make four dollars and a half a week, and my little interest does for the two of us."

"I hope your boy will grow up to be a noble Christian man, and repay you for all this love and sacrifice."

"I am sure he will: I keep my courage up by planning for a quiet happy old age, nursing my grandchildren in his home," said Stella with a bright smile. "Now I think of it, suppose you try to get jackets to finish from a Cardigan jacket factory. Any one can do that."

Finally, between bags, tags, and jackets, Deborah secured an income of about ten dollars a week for her Bureau, as the result of two hundred hours' work, at about five cents an hour, and this was very munificent wages, and only secured by piece-work in such conditions of rooms, good air, light, tools, as the workers could never get in their own homes. Especially was the rapidity of work a result of the trained brains of Uncle Josiah and Deborah, showing the girls how to work together helpfully, and securing a new kind of work as soon as some other kind had failed.

Five cents an hour! Who could complain of such wages! The earner of five cents an hour must be simply rolling in the lap of luxury! Five cents an hour yielded fifty cents a day for ten hours' work, or sixty cents for twelve hours. Fourteen hours of daily work will at this rate yield four dollars and twenty cents a week! When a woman has only seventy-five cents a week to pay for rent, forty cents a week for light and fuel for her long hours' work, if she spends on her food fifteen cents a day, she can have a dollar ninety cents a week for clothes and shoes, for lost time and sickness.

Fifteen cents a day for food is a short allowance, and admits of but little use of meat, butter, or fruit. When we consider that the women who are reduced to living upon this small amount do not as a general thing understand the relative values of food-stuffs, and have neither the knowledge nor the appliances of judicious, healthful preparation of plain food, the problem becomes still more distressing.

Thirty-seven lost working-days in a year are a heavy item. The kitchen servant in general loses more, but the conditions of her life as to exercise, rest, food, warmth, sleep, and ventilation are very much better than those of the factory girls or wage-earners of that class.

Besides there are many days of enforced idleness, there are the well-known "slack seasons." "No work to-day," "Only half work this week," "Can't afford over half pay this month," "Market glutted"—these are remarks that often greet the working woman as she goes for her share of work.

Did Eve ever dream as she stood listening to that curse of labor and sweat falling upon Adam, that the heaviest half of it was likely to be heired by her daughters, and that as the ages went by these same daughters should be holding out imploring hands for the share of the curse, and weeping miserably when it was denied? If the first mother had with prophetic soul divined all that, how would she have marvelled at the strangeness of her children's destiny!

In her Bureau Deborah met all the antagonism that Stella had foretold to her. She found also the silent antagonism of neglect. Plenty of people were told of the Bureau, and asked to further its plans by going there if they needed to secure work done. And by-and-by when asked if they had done their little to aid in the way of patronage, the answer would be, "Oh, we quite forgot it!" "Bell Street is so out of the way." "We lost the address you wrote for us." "We are so in the habit of going to the shops, and to the other intelligence offices." "Yes; but you see it would be so troublesome to have sewing done in the house. It is much easier just to go and buy the things ready made, and really cheaper."

Cheaper! Yes, that is it. Cheaper! Oh Moloch of the age! Then how often was Deborah disappointed in the girls themselves. Some came to her protesting even with tears their poverty, lack of home, of friends, of work. They would do anything, take anything. But put to the proof, "Would they go out to service?" "No! Not for any wages. They were independent: they would not have a mistress over them."

Then those who with meek faces and ready assent would receive moral advice, warnings against bad books, bad men of their acquaintance, and loose bold ways, would with perhaps a little more slyness continue their objectionable methods. Lying and hypocrisy were so common among them, and those were faults very detestable to a woman of Deborah's frank courageous nature. The duplicity of many of her protégées made her heart-sick.

"But what would you have?" said Uncle Josiah. "They have been reared in deceitfulness from infancy; their parents before them lived in conditions fitted to nourish the faults of hypocrisy and double dealing. Weeds grow in uncultivated ground, but garden flowers do not, and if they spring in waste places they speedily dwindle and degrade. Do n't ask too much virtue; be thankful to find the few sturdy virtues that there are among these girls. Most of them are generous, faithful to each other—pitiful to the suffering, courageous, hopeful, industrious. Go and help them up: do n't complain because they are not already up. Be glad of what you can get at present."

"It is true, my dearie," said Nurse Agnes, when she saw Deborah discouraged and mournful, "it is true that there is mickle ill in the warl', an' it crops out pretty plain hereabout. This hoose ye hae opened has drawn intil it some who are no' worthy, an' the worthy are too shamefaced to come. When I was a lass I heard this proverb, 'Fiddlers' dogs an' flees comes to a feast uncalled.' But ne'er grow weary o' spreadin' the feast for a' that.

"By-and-by ye will learn to discern between those that you should help and those that do not really need the help. Do not be discouraged because these lassies ha' never been taught that it is 'aye weel to be the same thing that ye would be called.' One by one ye will fin' the Lord jewels i' the mire and gaither them out for his crown; and they will be your crown o' rejoicing too in that great day."

"You find some troublesome ones and some naughty ones," said Uncle Josiah; "but think of the good ones. Think of little Mrs. Howe. Is not she worth knowing?"

Deborah smiled. Dear little Mrs. Howe! They had dubbed her the "Good Samaritan," a brisk, withered hale old woman, living on a pension of twelve dollars a month. She also had been rent-free from the landlord of her house, who said she was "worth as much to him as two Bible women and a policeman," so did she maintain the peace and show how to eke out income, so did she succeed in keeping people in work and in heart—showing the best way of doing things, nursing the sick, tending the children, going about doing good from morning until night. "She has stopped four or five epidemics by her good sense. She is worth a whole Board of Health," said the district doctor.

Thirty years of active self-sacrificing toil had endeared the brisk little old lady to all her neighborhood. There were wives and mothers there whom she had nursed as children. Even in that shifting population she had seen men and women grow up from childhood or stoop from middle life to age. How had this living Christian commended Christianity!

Deborah felt as if a strong helper had come to her the first time that Mrs. Howe crossed her threshold. What a close friendship she and

Nurse Jamieson struck up, as they sat for hours discussing how this one should be helped toward good, and that one hindered from evil, and how by-and-by the work here should all be ended, and the city of the King reached with rejoicing.

And so the days went on, in hope and disappointment, in much seed-sowing and some little reaping, in an increasing triumph over the first difficulties of the position; and now Deborah's Bureau had been open for a year, and she and her work were becoming better understood.

What had this ward gained since first Deborah became one of its swarming inhabitants? There was a factory conducted on liberal principles, trying in every way to benefit the employées; there was a Day Nursery, the Settlement, and the Working Women's Bureau. Were all these instrumentalities doing any good? Was the ward improving? The policemen, the police sergeants, were the ones to ask. They said arrests had diminished one-fourth, property value had increased, the death-rate had remarkably decreased. Finally, they wished every ward in the city was thus moving on the up-grade.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WIDENING PLANS.

> " She knew not if beneath the boughs they woke,
> Or dropped upon her from the realms above.
> ' What wilt thou, woman!' in the dream he spoke;
> ' Thy sorrow moveth me, thyself I love.
> Long have I counted up thy mournful years,
> Once I did weep to wipe away thy tears.' "

THE columns of the city papers must be kept full. When exciting political campaigns are in progress, when wars and rumors of wars fill the air, easy is the task of the editor. He has only to take what pleases him best of the crowding news which our Athenians of the nineteenth century love to hear; but when the " whole earth is at rest and keepeth quiet," then is every nook and corner of the metropolis searched for an item, and great is the joy of the reporter at finding something new under the sun and exquisite is his elaboration of every small theme.

The first year of Deborah's experiment with her Bureau was the year of an exciting Presidential contest, and no news but party news was sought after. The humble effort for the benefit of working-girls was ignored or put in diamond type in a corner. But when the next year came, Uncle Josiah met at the Seamen's Bethel a young reporter who devoted himself especially to the gathering of items concerning religious and philanthropic work. Having met him a few times in temperance gatherings, Uncle Josiah unfolded to him the plan of the Bureau and invited him to visit it. The reporter came and was at once an enthusiastic admirer of Deborah and her work, of the Settlement, and of Leila's Day Nursery. Possessing a facile pen, he wrote up these matters attractively, and so the press, that great angel flying between heaven and earth, arrived to the aid of Deborah's plans.

The very first extended article on the Bureau came under the eye of a pastor just called to one of the large churches of the city, a man intensely interested in work for the working people. He came promptly to see the Bureau, and lo he had been in his youth well acquainted with Uncle Josiah, in whose native place he had attended school. In those days Uncle Josiah's library and pretty little home had been open to David MacMay, and now Dr. David MacMay was glad to renew the old-time friendship. Speedily the two were very intimate and in frequent conference. Dr. MacMay made known the Bureau work to the ladies of his flock; carriages now appeared before the door of the Bureau; it was easy to find places for the women who were applying for work in increasing numbers; seamstress and laundress work was secured through the Bureau, nurses, typewriters, cooks, and maids were called for; the flour-bags and tags disappeared, and sewing and mending at far better prices came in their room. The new friends suggested new methods of earning money and new kinds of work for workers. Kindly hearts thought to send some of Deborah's invalids or tired-out ones into the country for some time; some were taken into city homes for a resting season.

Deborah, Agnes, Uncle Josiah, and some people outside of the Bureau who received its advantages, but did not live in its family, had helped to eke out that work at five cents an hour, which had kept the Bureau going. Such intense efforts were now not needed; the work was paid for at nine or ten cents an hour.

Another advantage grew out of this new acquaintance. Mrs. Howe and Nurse Agnes had heard frequently of pitiable cases of suffering, and went among the aged, orphans, or hopeless invalids. There is little accommodation for incurables in hospitals, while their need is so great! How pitifully their years lengthen out in poverty and discomfort, with the spectre of the poorhouse rising before them, grimmer as nearer day by day! Our city poorhouses or almshouses are so architecturally splendid outside, so desolate, hard, and unhomelike within! Every city should have a large and well-appointed hospital for the incurables. The sudden cases of accident or sickness may find the speedy release of death, but the years stretch in a weary vista for those who are too sick and miserable to enjoy living, too tenacious of life to die.

Another need which Mrs. Howe much dwelt upon was that of a Home for Aged Couples. Old Men's Homes, Old Women's Homes, but how few Homes for the aged pair who have together travelled the long and tiresome years and borne the burden and heat of the day. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Doubly endeared to each other by the endurance of vicissitudes, by the miseries lightened, the joys shared, why in decrepitude should they be driven to separate wards in the almshouse or left to starve in an attic? Why not rather put a premium on this married fealty and affection and let the two, in a Home for Aged Couples, share in peace life's slow decline? Here and there, in isolated cities, we have such homes, but always insufficient to the need, and then, O beloved, how much red tape and how many puerile restrictions! In hospitals and "homes," if anywhere, we should study the golden rule, "to do as we would be done by."

When such friends rose up around the Bureau attention could be called to the destitute aged couples, the chronic invalids, the sore and pressing need of the helpless, as well as work found for those able to work.

"The cities," said Dr. MacMay, "are the great centres of civilization; they are also the headquarters of sorrow!"

These new friends afforded Deborah a golden opportunity of making real a cherished dream — country visits for Jean, Martha, Bella, and some others, girls who were not sick, who could robustly endure their crowded homes and their lives of labor, but who mentally and spiritually needed the broadening influence of change, of getting close to nature.

"What, miss! send me for a country visit for a fortnight!" cried Jean. "Send a sick one; I can rough it."

"I want to put something better into your life, Jean; this will help bring childhood back. You must go; I'm building large hopes on you for the years to come when you have lived down the old craving and the old experiences; you will be my right-hand woman and we will, please God, work together many years. These country visits, now and then, will help you towards that."

"It 's true when I have had a word from Oliver, now and again, about the trees and the green roadsides and the bit singing birds where he lives, I 've longed to go, as a child longs for the lap o' its mother; and Mrs. Hodge has asked me to spend a Sunday there."

"I wonder they do n't all fly to the country in a body," said Deborah to Dr. MacMay.

"If we could send back to the country those who rashly leave its advantages, it would be one of the best blessings we could confer upon them. Some of them return thankfully; some, ashamed, discouraged, will not go; some cannot go. But there are many, born and grown in the city, to whom going to the country is not 'return to Eden,' but exile. They know none of its ways. Moreover, if we emptied the city into the rural districts, we should simply change the place and keep the pain; the penury of the city and its vice would be transferred, not cured. It is not every man who, given a hoe and a seed-package, can get his dinner from the ground."

"That is true," said Uncle Josiah, "and there you touch on a fact that is ignored by many of our philanthropic workers. It is assumed that every child on the streets of the city is pining for fresh air, flowers, green grass; that the greatest treat you can give such children is to take them to the country and give them milk. That is a great mistake. A curbstone and a half-rotten banana are to some of these city youngsters a much more desirable treat than any amount of grass and milk. I have seen some of these lean, half-fed gamins taken from the slums to a farm and seized with a wretched nostalgia for crowded tenements and foul-smelling streets—*urbs* is in the ascendant, not *rus*. All children are not born with a yearning after cows, pigs, and chickens; all girls do not take cheerfully to milking and weeding, the airy farmhouse kitchen, with wide reaches of clover-field in bloom. They were born to the clangor of bells, the crash of wheels, the whirr of machinery. We must take people as we find them, not as we fancy it is better they should be. And we must help them, generally, where they are. Moreover, we must provide ordinary, feasible means of help. If we are not to catch our larks until the sky falls, we shall not catch any larks. Let us make our mud-pies with the mud that is at hand; we cannot send to the San Juan Islands for fine clay, or to Trinidad for asphalt, or to France for the delicate clay that makes Sèvres china."

Deborah laughed. "And *must* we make our mud-pies?"

"How many moulders of mud-pies have become carvers of noble statuary, potters, making vessels to honor; builders of porcelain pagodas, producers of finest china to rejoice the souls of connoisseurs. Luca della Robbia and Palissy the potter were no doubt early adepts in mud-pies. How do we know to where our mud-pies may grow?"

"Which all means," said Deborah, "that by simple methods, by organization, we must work for the city in the city; try to make better the conditions of those whom the city holds and will not let go."

"And you," said Dr. MacMay, "have touched, I think, the right solution. The work should be faithfully done ward by ward. Let us get on with our ideal ward. Like Plato and his friends, we are fashioning a Republic not for ourselves alone, it may be a pattern for the world. We have provided bath-houses and summer and winter gardens; we have provided for the children. Let us now provide for those who have reached a working age. But first let us say that our properly-governed city shall have compulsory education, and shall not allow child-labor. The streets shall not be infested with young children, half-clad, hungry-looking, and pitiful, to appeal to public charity, while they ostensibly sell pencils, flowers, and little patent articles."

"Right here," said Deborah, "let me tell you an instance that I heard from Mrs. Howe. A family had four small children, and these, from the time they reached the age of four or five, were stationed in public places to run after passers-by and entreat them to buy small wares. The poor babies won sympathy that often gave a quarter for a five-cent article. The father and mother had three rooms in a tenement-house and lived luxuriously; cream, Mocha coffee, gilt-edged butter, porterhouse steaks, cake, beer, whatever they wanted they got, for the children brought in, together, about a hundred dollars a month. The man, an expert brass worker, was offered twenty-three dollars a week, but would not take it; he knew that the children could earn as much as that for him, while he lived in idleness."

"That is selling your own flesh and blood with a vengeance," said Dr. MacMay, "and the State as the greater parent should stand between such monster parents and their offspring and secure for the little ones childhood and education. And now for our workers. We shall have the Settlement to educate them to better aspirations and the Bureau to bring, as you put it, Miss Grosvenor, need and opportunity together. And we shall have, in time, model factories and business houses, giving to all men what is just and equal, and having regard to the physical, moral, and financial good of the workers. O happy city in such a case!"

When the Bureau had been eighteen months in operation, Uncle Josiah told Deborah that he had received for it a donation of twenty thousand dollars. They must secure the next house, enlarge operations, and Deborah must give up her place as forewoman for Rendel Brothers and devote herself to extending and perfecting her Bureau work. "I want to see what you can do," said Uncle Josiah.

Among the workers in the finishing-room had been for some months a quiet, ladylike young woman, with a sweet smile, who in a silent, gentle way was a power for good among the girls. She was a frequent guest at the Settlement, and seemed cheerily to take every way to ameliorate the unpleasantnesses of her position and to make the best of herself and of her life. She was an orphan; her father had been a country minister, and Deborah from her first acquaintance had made common cause with her. This young friend was now invited to be clerk and book-keeper of the Bureau. "Learn all its workings," said Uncle Josiah. "Some time it may be left to your sole management."

"And what will become of Deborah?"

"Who knows?" said Uncle Josiah with the air of an oracle.

Winter passed, and when spring came Dr. MacMay had a new plan on foot—a sea-side home for some of the city workers. Nurse Jamieson and Mrs. Howe were to go for a month among the others. Deborah was going to spend a month with Leila Stirling, to see the happiness of Leila's shop-girl guests and to rejoice in the growth and charms of the baby Linda, now a merry chattering toddler, filling Leila with daily delight.

"Let us go and find Mrs. Howe," said Andrew MacMay to Deborah, "and arrange for her to go with Agnes to the beach at once. I thought the dear little old lady looked worn when I saw her last."

Andrew MacMay was Dr. MacMay's younger brother, an editor with philanthropic work for his hobby. He was often at the Bureau, and Deborah was sure of his interest in every widening scheme. They set out to find Mrs. Howe. She was not at her room, but as they turned down an adjacent street they heard a piping little call, and there was Mrs. Howe breathlessly trotting after them. There was no smile on her pale, drawn face; it was evident she was ill.

"I knew you were looking for me," she panted; "I have been all day with a sick person."

"It is easy to see that you are ill yourself," said Deborah. "Come at once to the invalid room at my Bureau, and let Agnes nurse you until you can go with her to the beach."

It was but a little way, and Deborah and her friend helped the weary little body along. Nurse Agnes gave her a tonic and put her to bed. Mr. MacMay remained at the Bureau, and he and Uncle Josiah and Deborah had tea in the sitting-room, served by a little girl whom Deborah had taken to bring up. They often had tea in that fashion, and enjoyed it much. After tea Nurse Jamieson sent them word that Mrs. Howe wanted to see them. She was propped up against white pillows.

" I want to bid you good-by," she said, " for I am going away; I think I have a message from the King. I have prayed to be allowed to work as long as I lived, and then go speedily. The Lord has not been unmindful of my request."

Then said Uncle Josiah, " 'Now while they lay here, and waited for the good hour, there was a noise in the town that there was a post come from the Celestial City, with matter of great importance to one Christiana, the wife of Christian, the Pilgrim. So inquiry was made for her, and the house was found out where she was; so the post presented her with the letter, the contents whereof were, " Hail, good woman! I bring thee tidings that the Master calleth for thee, and expecteth that thou shouldst stand in his presence in clothes of immortality, within ten days." ' "

"It will be less than ten days, sir; not ten hours I make sure, for the pitcher is broken at the fountain and the wheel is broken at the cistern. My work is done, and I am going. Read me the twenty-third Psalm, Mr. MacMay, please."

He read it. A light, as from the land of light, fell over the white hair and pallid face.

"It is good to work for God," she said. "It brings no sorrow. I wish I had worked more. You will work more and better. Good-by."

She closed her eyes, then presently looked up again at Deborah and Mr. MacMay standing near her. "Good-by. You will work more and better—and you will work together."

"God grant it!" said Mr. MacMay gently in Deborah's ear. She did not look towards him Her eyes were fixed on the aged face, settling into the calm of death.

"After she looked, for this her dream was deep;
She looked, and there was naught beneath the tree;
Yet did her love and longing overleap
The fear of angels, awful as they be,
And she passed out between those blessed things
And brushed her mortal weeds against their wings."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"AT LAST I TELL YOU THE TRUTH."

> "Oh that some power would give me Adam's eyes,
> Oh for the straight simplicity of Eve!
> For I see naught, or grow, poor fool, too wise
> With seeing—to believe."

AFTER the heat and closeness of the city nothing could be more delightful than the change to the home of Leila Stirling. Honeysuckles loaded the air with perfume; there were beds of pansies and verbenas in shady places; every week new and choice roses bloomed, and a splendid procession of lilies kept pace with the advancing season. A stream rippled under willows, swans sailed on a miniature lake, the undisturbed birds and squirrels frequented the trees, while here and there, across the lawn, hopping in security, might be seen the gray and white of a wild rabbit.

Seated one evening on the veranda, beside Leila's invalid's chair, Deborah watched the beautiful shadows cast by the full moonlight on the lawn; crickets chirred, shrill katydids called; the whippoorwill sounded its monotone from the distant willows, and the frogs lent a hoarse bassoon to the night music.

"Deborah, what would you like best of all for yourself, for your future life?" asked Leila. "Build such a castle for the future as you would like best to live in."

"That might not be wise occupation, even for an hour," said Deborah; "it might help to make me discontented; for my life all along the future is sure, by my own choice, to be very different from that which I should really desire, if it were honestly and rightly possible."

"Then at least live that life for once, in a dream," urged Leila, "and when I am thinking of you as I often do, I can have that fresh avenue for thought to travel—what might be if it could. Begin, my Deborah! Sick folks must be humored."

Deborah laughed and yielded; the charm of her surroundings, the ease, the softness of the moonlight, lured towards dreams.

"I would like to have what people—I mean most women—most desire, a home—an individual, domestic home, not a Bureau or a Settlement or a crowded house. I should like those to visit, to aid, to help on, but I really would like a home. That is God's ideal for the race, and its loveliness has grown into my heart in these five years since I lost my home. When I had a home I was discontented and did not interest myself in it. There was nothing left in it for me to do, and so I did not care so much for it. We had, I think, under my poor step-mother's administration, no true domesticity. I should like to create a home."

"Yes: and what kind of a home?"

"Outside of the city, but near my work: a home surrounded by trees, birds, flowers, green fresh hedges, and soft sward. A home not so expensive as this that has been left you, my Leila, but commodious and beautiful, for I dearly love beauty."

"Yes," said Leila again approvingly, "I understand, such a place as this Vinton property, next to me. A gem of a place, and not dear. It would just suit you, Deborah. Good water; plenty of fruit; lovely views; good stable for two horses: all modern conveniences. I read the advertisement to-day. It is for sale, in excellent order."

"I am afraid it will stay long in Vinton hands, if poor Deborah, who has nothing, must be sole aspirant to its possession."

"Yes, no doubt. But go on, Deborah; let us imagine you did have just such a home, and income to maintain it. Then?"

"You understand, my dear, I should need much more than income enough to maintain my own home; because if I fell back into my old style of consuming all that I possess upon myself, I should soon be the idle, discontented, selfish Deborah, useless and careless, that I once was. How much greater would be my blame now, because I have learned how great is the cry of human need and how blessed it is to answer it! I have been 'in Eden, the garden of God,' in point of opportunity. If I were to have a well-appointed home, and live in it, then I must have an income more than double enough for the moderate and just needs of that home, so that I could carry on my work for workers. I must be able 'to stretch forth my hands to the poor, yea, to reach forth my hands to the needy.' I must be able 'to entertain strangers.' My handmaids to whom I give work, my household who are clothed in scarlet, my maids who have their portion, must be all my needy working sisters. 'Whoso putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God.'"

"Then you must have a husband like-minded with yourself."

"Yes; but you see clearly that I could never say to any man, 'Here is a work that I have chosen, a work given to me to do; take it now and do it; dedicate all that you have to it.' Because every one must do his own work, and that would be to merge my call to work in the work of another, also called to serve."

"And so?"

"So, as I am not rich, and cannot dedicate an income and my superintendence to such work as I am doing in the city, I must give myself, my personal work, to it instead."

"But if that is every one's duty, where will be the homes?"

"Clearly it is not every one's duty, but it is mine. Most girls have not, with my opportunities of education, served such an apprenticeship to poverty as I have. Few began by being so idle and selfish, by such a miserable misuse of large means. I see it is in me to be such a self-server that I should not *dare* to live as others do, giving only a little time, thought, or income to philanthropic work. I should relapse to what I was and what I hate. My soul has been too deeply stirred to permit me to risk that selfish life again. I am content now that God shall take my service and use me as he will."

"That means that you would follow every clear indication of Providence?"

"I hope so, whether pleasant or painful. Do you not see that God, by the way in which he has prospered me, has set the seal of his approval on my work?"

"It seems so indeed," said Leila.

The next evening Leila and Uncle Josiah sat together on the veranda, and up and down along the moonlighted paths two tall figures paced slowly—Deborah and Andrew MacMay.

Uncle Josiah had come to spend a few days at Leila's home. Mr. MacMay had come from the city to take tea. It was a long trip, merely to get tea; and now Leila began to think that this guest would miss the midnight train for the city, so indifferent he seemed to the horse that waited for him before the great gate.

Finally these two turned and walked towards the gate.

"It is ended," said Uncle Josiah.

"With a *no*," said Leila, "for you notice the space between them as they walk? Deborah, you see, has given her all—herself and all that she has—to her work."

Uncle Josiah rose and followed his niece and Mr. MacMay briskly down the walk. He came up with them at the gate. "Going, Mr. MacMay?"

"Yes, I am late too."

"Never fear; you will get—the train."

"Good-by," said Deborah in a tone of finality.

"Not for long," said Andrew MacMay sturdily; "I am coming back, if I do miss to-night."

"So you refused him?" said Uncle Josiah, as the editor rode off.

"How do you know, uncle?"

"I am not an idiot, if I am an old bachelor.

He is a good man and a true, an educated Christian gentleman; I find him handsome and agreeable. Why that 'no,' Deborah?"

"What other course was left me, uncle? I could not handicap any man with the work I have undertaken. My Bureau is now fairly independent, but the Bureau is not all. The city lies down there; you see the red glare of its night lights against the sky; it is full of need, of misery, of sin. I know down there a thousand working-girls, my sisters, who call me to aid them. They are neglected, oppressed, given hard work, long hours, scant wages, severe household burdens. They have no time, no knowledge, no power to rise up in their own behalf and make their conditions better. Physically, morally, religiously, financially, they need help. Who shall give it? Who shall know the real wrongs and the right remedy but one who has been of them, shared their difficulties, and yet has shared a better too and knows by the contrast how sore the trials are and what comforts and advantages are possible to woman? Where can one be found to whom God has given such opportunities of training for this work as to me? If I could supplement my superintendence by wealth and by my social influence, then I might prosecute the work in that way. But my days of wealth and social influence are gone by; to do anything at all now, I must give myself."

"You have said what I wanted you to say, Deborah."

"Then you do not blame me?" said Deborah, taking her uncle's arm with a little sigh, for now the sound of the horse's feet had died away down the road.

"Blame you, my child? You have in all things more than met my expectations. But this man—at least he is sincere; he is not a fortune-hunter, Deborah."

Deborah laughed a little. "The days are gone by when fortune-hunters swarmed about me. From the time when I was seventeen until I was twenty-one I had—well, a number of offers. I think all of them were due to my fortune. And, uncle, I cannot blame those suitors for being attracted by what was my only attraction. How could any one love a girl so cold, so supercilious, so indifferent to others, so intensely selfish, so unutterably discontented as I was?"

"You were always handsome, Deborah."

"Handsomeness, beauty, consists chiefly in expression, uncle; and truly, as I remember how I looked in that glass in my dressing-room, I think I had as disagreeable an expression as was ever on anybody's face!" cried Deborah frankly.

They were back at the veranda, and Leila heard the statement. "At all events you have a most attractive expression now, dear Deborah," she said.

"I think it must have improved," said Deborah cheerily, "for I notice that dogs and babies take to me, and once they did not. I do n't trust to the glass now very much, for mine is small and somewhat crooked, and besides I am too busy to look at it often."

"Deborah," said Uncle Josiah, "it is late, but I must have a long talk with you to-night; and Leila wishes to hear it. We can rest later to-morrow, to make up for late hours to-night. To begin with, will you fix your mind carefully and intently on what you were five years ago when your step-mother was killed. Meditate on that for five minutes. Remember carefully."

"I have remembered, uncle," said Deborah after a little. "I was an intolerable burden to myself, had no care for others, no realization of Christian duty, no love to God!"

"Now, my child, return in fancy to that state of mind and heart; suppose that your father's fortune had come to you intact, and follow out in thought the life you would have lived."

After a time of silence Deborah spoke: "Uncle, it would have been a bitter, weary life, and the end thereof death."

"Tell me, Deborah, has this change that has come over your spirit, the difference in yourself, in your manner of life, in your eternal prospects, been worth the price you have paid for it, loss of fortune, loss of social position, loss of ease and leisure? Has it been worth the vexations and rebuffs you have suffered as a working woman?"

After another careful pause: "Yes, uncle. And as to the rebuffs, my nature is not one to suffer much from them. I am given to taking myself at my own valuation, and being sufficient to myself."

"Deborah, I have something to tell you. I must begin with your father. He had been trained by a pious mother to live for God. Little by little, in the cares of business, he turned aside to the service of Mammon and lived only to be rich. When he lay near to death, he felt that he had 'fed on the east wind, that a deceived heart had turned him aside.' His repentance was bitter and deep. One great burden on his heart was that you, to him the dearest being on earth, had been spoiled by the selfish and luxurious atmosphere by which he had surrounded you. He saw you exposed to the perils of a very rich woman; he saw you an entirely selfish and very unhappy woman; he knew that you had large capacities, smothered by the incubus of your idle life; he remembered the genial, generous, loving character of your early childhood, and realized that a false system of education had crushed or warped those lovely native qualities and developed evil traits in their places. He who should have reared you for heaven had delivered you over, bound hand and foot, to the god of this world. In the midst of his self-reproach and intense anxiety for you I suggested to him a remedy, a heroic remedy. I proposed that he should divest himself of all his fortune and die a poor man; that you should be left a poor girl, compelled to meet the cares of poverty and work for your living; that you should learn by experience the sorrows and wants of your sister women. That I might not have the means out of which I might naturally be expected to assume your support in something of the ease and idleness in which you had grown up, I passed over to your father all my property, except an income of about eight hundred a year. Then your father divested himself of all his fortune, and to do this had to rely upon the secrecy and honor of two men, my friends from childhood. They were for five years to be sole possessors of the property, and at the end of five years to return it to you. For this return we had only their pledged faith. Also during those years, if, as we hoped, your heart enlarged and you gave yourself to philanthropic work, I was to aid you, as I saw right, in your schemes, and these friends were to furnish me money for such aid. It was from them, Deborah, that I got first six thousand and then twenty thousand for your Bureau. They are the real firm of Rendel Brothers, opening, at my instance, a factory carried on upon liberal and righteous principles. I pledged myself to your father that I would take care that you did not suffer in mind or in health from your battle with adversity. Nurse Jamieson was taken into our confidence and was to remain with you to care for your health. If either Agnes or I had died in this interval, the holders of your property had other guardians for you ready. We bound ourselves to your father that this experiment should last but five years, and when you reached twenty-six you should return to your inheritance, with whatever riches of experience you had gained. I felt assured that, released from the thraldom of your wealth and narrow social bondage, you would develop the strength and nobility of your character; and given, in the maturity of your twenty-six years, the stewardship of your property, you would ever hold it in fee for God and for humanity. Deborah, to-morrow you will be twenty-six years old. My friends will be here to-morrow, and in your own hands will then be vested the wealth which your father had nearly lost your soul and his own to secure. That fortune, my child, like the water brought to David 'from the well of Bethlehem which is before the gate,' had nearly been the price of blood. David thought the draught too sacred to be consumed on self; he poured it out as an offering before the Lord. Take back, my child, what was taken from you for a season and answer to God henceforth for your stewardship."

Deborah sat astounded; she could not speak.

"I only knew this since yesterday," said Leila.

"No one else knew it but the two friends who hold the property, your father, lawyer, and Agnes and myself," said Uncle Josiah. "You see if it had been known to more, and bruited about, your social condition would at once have been such that my experiment must have failed; you could not have known the depths of poverty and ostracism."

"I have *not* known the depths of poverty. As for the ostracism, I did not mind it," said Deborah.

"If you had had wider experience of life," said Uncle Josiah, "greater business knowledge, I think you would have suspected that affairs were not exactly as you saw them on the surface.

My salary of thirty dollars, paid monthly by myself, held out for too many treats. Flowers and appliances for mission work came to us with a readiness that would have made some people suspicious. Your engagement with Rendel Brothers, as forewoman, might have seemed just a little strange to one versed in the ways of the world. Luckily you took what came to you, and did not inquire too closely into it. That was the case in regard to the money received for the Bureau.

"I suspected that you would trust me so much, and be so absorbed in what you were doing, that I could help you over hard places without revealing my secret. You have found out some of the hardness of a working woman's life, my dear. Never forget that there would have been a ten-fold hardness if you had really been cast on the world without a friend or a dollar."

"Deborah, tell me," cried Leila, "did they do right? Are you satisfied with this experiment?"

"Yes, I am," said Deborah.

"When I first heard it it seemed a hard remedy," said Leila.

"What remedy is too hard when the saving of a soul is in question," said Uncle Josiah. "And after all what is it that has been done? Consider our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich! Compared with that infinite condescension what is this little step which Deborah made from the house of Dives to the house of Lazarus?"

"If I had known all this I might not, I could not, have learned my lesson as I have." Deborah rose and stood in the moonlight with clasped hands; her face was radiant. "Oh, uncle! I praise God that he gave my father courage to accept what he gave you wisdom to plan! Now I know how wise was my father's love, how deep his penitence! Now I know how you desired that I should reach my highest possible plane. Blessed be the path that makes us more Christlike, however hard it is to tread."

"You have learned that, now you are steward of a large fortune, you must be neither selfish nor lavish. If the loss of your father had broken up your coldness and selfishness, while you had no knowledge resulting from experience, you might have done mischief by pauperizing people, and the undeserving might have been those who shared your chief favors. And you have no doubt been saved what your father feared for you most of all—a loveless marriage with a fortune-hunter. He yielded to my plan in the hope of making you a happy woman."

CHAPTER XXV.

ARISE AND LET US BUILD.

"'The wilderness,'
One angel said, 'the solitary place,
Shall yet be glad for him, and he shall reign.'
The other angel answered, 'He shall reign.'"

"ARE *you* back?" It was the next day at noon, and so Deborah spoke to Andrew MacMay, at Leila Stirling's door. The door had been standing open that hot August morning; Deborah was crossing the hall as Andrew came up. Surprised she cried, "Are *you* back?" She was expecting Uncle Josiah's friends to appear presently.

"My brother David sent me," said Andrew with humility.

"It was a deal of trouble to send," began Deborah.

"When he might have written," suggested Andrew.

"Yes. But surely you will come in."

They went into a little reading-room, near the library.

"There is to be a great meeting in my brother's church a week from to-day, and we want you to be there. The ladies of our church are moving in the matter principally; Dr. Bell's people are uniting with us. This work by wards, the Settlement, Nursery, Bureau in each ward, is more and more attracting attention, and your work is more and more coming into notice. Our people want to begin work, open a Bureau, plant a Settlement, and found a Nursery in the ward next south of the one you are working. Miss Jacqueline Day is to come and tell about the Settlement plan. We want a paper from Miss Stirling, about Day Nurseries."

"You must ask her about that. But what do you want from me?"

"Who, I? My brother wants that you should explain all about the Bureau and its work."

"Find some one else. They will not want to be dictated to by a working woman. If I appear there, it will be strictly as a working woman, and moreover you know that I am pronounced in my views and express myself emphatically. They might consider me dictatorial."

"They will see that you know what you are talking about. They will be stirred by your enthusiasm, aroused by your energy. They will see that you are a natural leader, and a leader is wanted—one quick to sympathize, wise to plan, courageous to execute. Surely you will come. Here is the opportunity for extending the very work which you have at heart."

"Yes; I will be there. But society is so constituted that it looks to rich women, or women in some way distinguished for leaders, not to working women."

"Deborah, you are rich in yourself; rich in your experience, rich in your gifts, rich in the abundance of your sympathies. What you have planned for your sister women you can show other women how to execute."

"I will be there. As for Leila's paper, suppose you go into the library and ask Leila."

She led him to the library. In the hall they met Uncle Josiah. "Deborah, I have some friends whom you must see in the drawing-room."

She bade Andrew MacMay good morning. Over an hour later Deborah went out upon the veranda. Mr. MacMay stood there. "Miss Stirling has asked me to dinner," he said.

"And Uncle Josiah has asked his friends to dinner also."

"Come with me to that tall rose-bush. Some of those white roses are just what your gray mull dress needs."

They went to the rose-bush and he gathered the flowers for her. "I told you what my brother wanted of you. You have agreed to his request. You asked me by accident what *I* wanted. You know quite well. That we should work all our lives together, united in the closest bonds that God has ordained. So we shall be doubly useful and happy."

"Yes," said Deborah, holding out her hand to him frankly, "let us work and be happy in that way."

"Do I hear you right? Can I believe it? Miss Stirling told me not to despair, but I feared."

"You did not think I would change my mind so soon?" said Deborah. "I have not changed my mind, but my circumstances have changed. Yesterday I was a poor woman and could not afford to be happy in that way. I have seen great need of a great work. To do it fairly I must either give large means and superintendence, or, lacking the means, I must give myself entirely. Yesterday I had no means to give. Hourly work, constant effort to interest others, were what I had to offer to my chosen mission. To-day I am rich, and I can not only give what I wish to supplement my plans, but I can by the force of riches impress others and draw them to the work."

"Rich? I do not understand you."

"It is that my money was simply taken away from me for a season, until by experience of privation, by being forced to labor, by seeing the world as it really is, and not through a golden glamour, I might know how to use well that of which I am the steward. Uncle Josiah proposed, planned, and carried out the experiment. I have, you see, been tested, and now I am thought worthy to use my fortune."

Andrew MacMay looked troubled. The heiress, Miss Grosvenor, was rich enough to alarm him. He shrank from being regarded by any as a fortune-hunter. People would think that he knew all about it! Deborah understood.

"*We* shall know how it was, if others do not. As to the money, it is already *Corban*, a gift to God."

"What a blessing it would be if into the seething miseries of the city could be cast many fortunes, not to pauperize the working classes, but to make tolerable the conditions of their existence; to enable them to reach the physical, moral, intellectual, social status worthy of the creatures of God and the children of the State," cried Andrew, clasping both her hands.

Mr. Conrad, one of Uncle Josiah's friends, came near. "This problem of the city population is becoming more and more pressing every day. The phenomenon of city-ward tendency is world-wide. Perhaps God has called you two to help show us how to avert its dangers."

"Miss Grosvenor," said Andrew, "does not propose like old-time Dives to feed Lazarus with the crumbs from her table. How would that story have read if it had ended that Dives raised Lazarus up, had him healed and clothed, and recognized him as a brother in the family of the divine Father?"

"It would then have had a different ending. Not that Dives begged for water to cool his tongue, but that he drank of the water of God's pleasures for evermore."

"Such a story has been told," said Andrew, "of the great philanthropist Quentin Hogg, who founded the London Polytechnic for Christ's sake, and has put into it seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars of his own money, besides his time and incalculable personal influence."

"Servant of God, well done!" said Deborah.

"And," continued Mr. Conrad, "that great Fresh-Air Movement which yearly saves so many children by means of a country vacation, was inaugurated by a poor man, a country minister, who had only his organizing abilities, his eloquent tongue, and his consecrated zeal to put into the work. One of the best city homes for working-girls was started by a young working-girl on a capital of one hundred and twenty-five dollars slowly saved out of her small wages."

"Let me tell you a little story," said Deborah. "One evening when I was at Leila Stirling's, I heard a ring, and stepped into the hall just in time to hear a timid, hurried voice and an indifferent 'no' in reply to it from the man servant.

"'Just a girl—wanting to sell something,' he said. It was nine o'clock at night, a winter night, cold and dark. I ran to the door, and, moving slowly from the steps I saw a slight figure. I called her, 'Girl, girl, come back please; I want what you have.' She came back a trembling, terrified country girl of sixteen, holding a little bracket. Some one had written through a friend, offering her a place as child's maid. She came to the city, only to find the house where she expected to live closed; the lady, entirely forgetful of the new girl, had suddenly gone South. The poor creature, not having money to return home, had wandered forlornly about the streets all day, and was trying to sell the little treasure which she carried in her hand to get a night's lodging. Homes, open to all, their doors and windows bearing their invitation to refuge, should be scattered through the cities, and reasonably near together; homes for working-girls, clean, attractive, well ventilated, well drained, comfortable, with elements of beauty. The working woman has the same yearning for home, the same longing for beautiful surroundings, as the richer woman."

"We want Clubs also," said Mr. Carver, another of Uncle Josiah's friends. "Wherever Working-Girls' Clubs have been instituted, the status of the girls has been elevated. In the Clubs the girls of best moral and mental quality come to the front; they raise the social level of the rest; they give them new ambitions, new ideas; they improve physique by inculcating regular hours, neatness, and sound diet. They encourage gymnastic exercises and evening classes. Give us more Girls' Clubs."

After dinner, while Miss Stirling's guests were on the piazza, a large wagon drove up, and Deborah saw in it Jean, Bella, Nan, Martha, Stella, now forewoman in her place, Oliver, and two others. "How surprised and delighted I am!" she said, and she led them towards a large arbor draped in clematis and roses. She knew that they would be abashed if at once brought face to face with the group of strange gentlemen gathered about Leila's chair.

"Something so queer happened," said Jean, always the mouthpiece of the others: "our whole factory got a holiday with wages not to be docked! Mr. Ames sorted us out from the rest, and said we were to come out here to visit you, and he gave us tickets and told us what train to take. Oh it has been such a trip, and what a splendid place this is! I do n't see how you can come back among us after being out here."

"Places are not worth as much as people," said Deborah. "I care for you girls. And, Stella, how do you get on being forewoman in my place?"

"Ask the girls," said Stella.

"Right well," said Martha. "She is firmer than I am. If we had not you, she would be next best."

"And if you were a forewoman with five hundred a year, what would you do, Stella?" said Deborah.

"I think I should get a little home outside of town where the schools were graded as in the city, so that my boy could be safe and continue his studies, and Bella's lame sister should live with me and keep my home."

After an hour of talk Deborah escorted her guests about the place, to see the lake and the swans, eat fruit in the orchard, to pick flowers in the garden, and finally took them back to the arbor, and Leila was wheeled out there in the reclining chair by Andrew MacMay and Uncle Josiah.

After another talk Deborah looked towards a table which had at Leila's orders been spread under the trees on the lawn; fruit, rolls, cold meat, chocolate, and other appetizing edibles had been spread out on this table, and there Deborah invited her visitors for a feast which lasted until the red glory of the evening died into a purple twilight.

Their beautiful visit was ended, but Deborah promised herself that she would buy Vinton Place, and that her working sisters should have many such visits there in the days to come.

"What!" said Jean to the others one day, some weeks later, "did she know when we were there that she was a rich woman, and yet treated us just the same? I feel sure now that she truly cares, and I shall not be afraid to love her even if she is rich; I shall love her all the more."

It was thus that Deborah had been tested and had borne the test.

The great meeting in Dr. MacMay's church was held as appointed. The story of Deborah and her fortune had crept into the papers, for what stays out of the newspapers? Crept in? No: marched in with all the flourish of reporters' trumpets. That prominence was the one thing which distressed Deborah; but these are days when one's private affairs are deemed lawful prey to the public. The affair of the "Grosvenor fortune" was a romance, a fairytale; it helped to pack the church at that meeting.

And when Deborah was called upon to tell the story of the Bureau, and her plan for having such a Bureau in every ward, she began by saying, "I come to you as a working woman. I too have earned my daily bread; I am glad that I can speak to you the things that I have seen, and testify what by my own experience I know. I can plead the cause of my sister women, because I know them and have lived among them, and I am assured that the true help of woman must not be looked for primarily from men, from working men or educated men or political economists, but from thoughtful Christian women. Every one of us women has an errand from God to our sister women; let us fulfil our errands with no aimless feet."

"Deborah Grosvenor," said an enthusiastic lady, an acquaintance of the old days, meeting her when the discussion was ended, "I never dreamed that there was so much in you!"

"There is no doubt a great deal in all of us just waiting to be brought out," said Deborah.

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